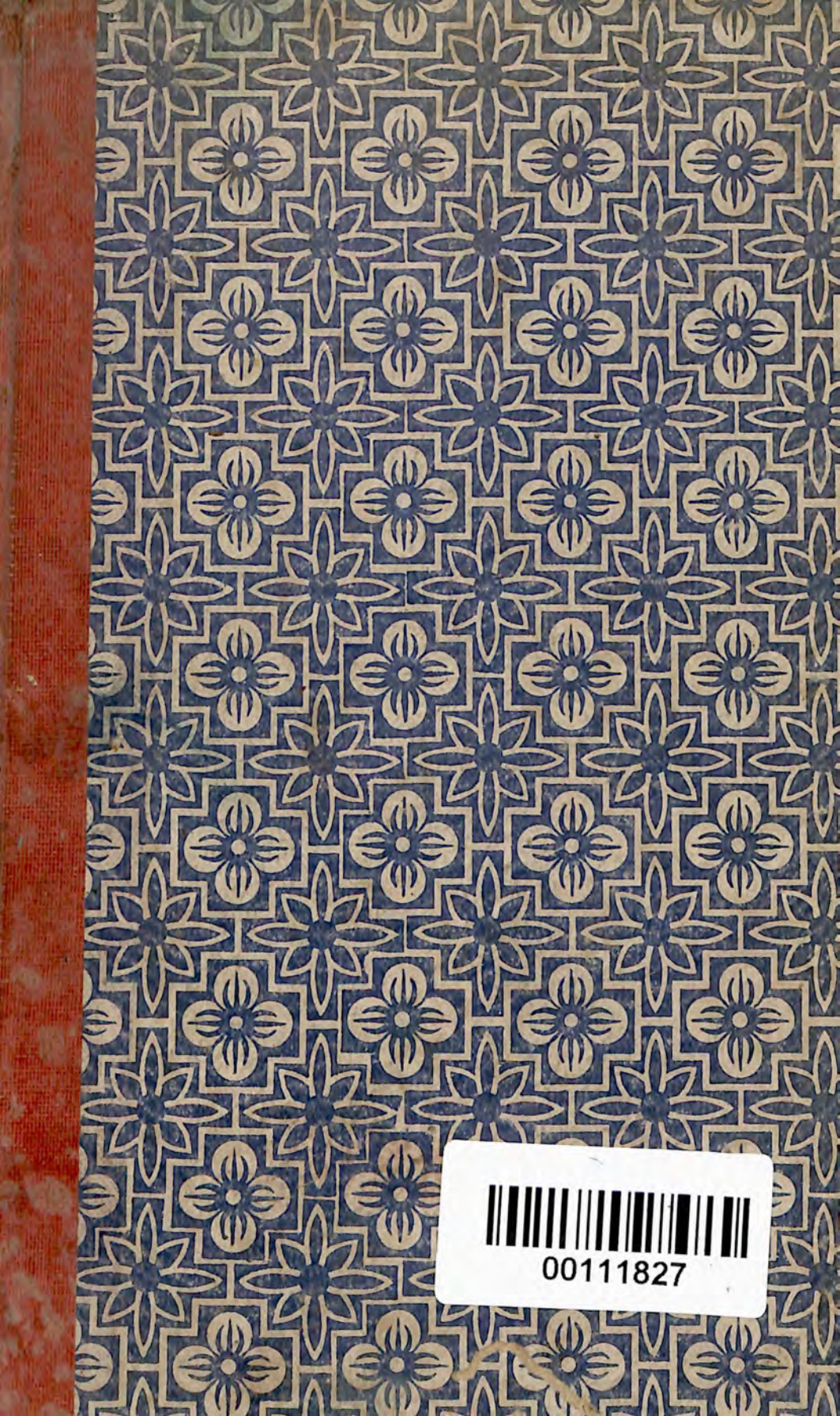
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THE

REVELATION OF ST JOHN,

EXPOUNDED FOR THOSE WHO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

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BY

E. W. HENGSTENBERG,
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TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL, BY THE

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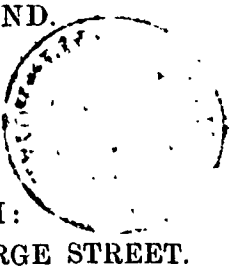
VOLUME SECOND.



EDINBURGH:
T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.; SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.; SEELEY & CO.; WARD & CO.; JACKSON & WALFORD, ETC.
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THIS second volume, together with the first, contains the whole of Dr Hengstenberg's work on the Revelation. The Translator has throughout confined himself to the task of endeavouring to convey the meaning of the original without essential alteration or abridgement, and without note or comment of his own. He is satisfied with having thus made accessible to students in this country a work on many accounts of great value, and one of the most important contributions of any age to Apocalyptic literature. He trusts, however, that his simply having done the part of a Translator will not be held as committing him to all the views it unfolds, either in respect to the general structure of the book, or to the precise import of particular symbols. He would certainly at times have been inclined to indicate a doubt, or to express a dissent, had he not deemed it better to allow the sentiments of the learned author to go forth in unimpaired freedom, that they may be considered entirely on their own merits. Occasionally, he is obliged to acknowledge, sentences have passed from him with a regret, that the thoughts contained in them should either have been expressed at all, or expressed in a form so capable of being turned to an improper use. The last sentence of the comment on ch. xix. 21 may be pointed to as an example of this description.

The work in the translation is accompanied with a twofold

Index, which will be of considerable value in facilitating references, the one to the passages in other books of Scripture, which have received incidental illustration, and the other to the more important topics discussed. It will be understood, that only those passages in the other books of Scripture are noticed, on which some elucidation is thrown in the Commentary. Simple references are not noticed in the Index. It is proper also to notice in regard to a term that occurs with great frequency in the original, *Weltmacht*, that in by far the greater number of instances it has been rendered "worldly power," or "power of the world," though in a considerable number also, especially when combined with "ungodly" or "God-opposing," it has been deemed better to preserve the more literal rendering of "world-power." Where the other renderings are adopted, it should still be borne in mind, what the English circumlocutions do not necessarily imply, that the term usually denotes the power of this world in a concentrated form, such as it exhibited in heathen Rome, and the other great monarchies of former times.

The following errata should have been added to the list in vol. i., but were not observed till too late for insertion: at p. 250, l. 19, *for* drew, *read* marched; at 372, l. 16, *for* passages, passage; at 451, l. 19, *for* designs, design; at 452, l. 16, *for* his nature, its nature; at 458, l. 6, *for* seal, sea; at 462, l. 14, *for* in Isai., is Isai.; at 479, l. 17, *for* mouth, north.

ERRATA IN VOL. II.

Page	24, line 14, *after* giving, *insert* a comma.		
..	34, .. 4, *for* sort,	*substitute*	root.
..	37, .. 17, *for* second,	..	third.
..	45, .. 2 (from bottom), *for* valerio,	..	Valerio.
..	95, .. 31, *for* the harps,	..	that the harpers.
..	205, .. 3 (2d note), *for* bestae,	..	bestiae.
..	218, .. 28, *for* Ezek. xviii.,	..	Ezek. xliii.
..	244, .. 2 (1st note), *for* mulierum,	..	mulierem.
..	279, .. 17, *for* The,	..	In.
..	296, .. 3 (note), *for* latter,	..	letter.
..	416, .. 8, *for* Baur,	..	Bahr.
..	438, .. 3 (from bottom), *for* Matthias,	..	Matthiae.
..	439, .. 18, *for* Diorian,	..	Dorian.
..	441, .. 19, *for* Testament,	..	Testament."
..	474, .. 15, *for* by,	..	in.

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THE

REVELATION OF SAINT JOHN.

THE SECOND ENEMY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, THE BEAST OUT OF THE SEA.

(Ch. xii. 18—xiii. 10.)

In the fulfilment of his calling, to console the church under the severe persecution she had to suffer for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, St John had deemed it enough, in the second and third groups, to give a general representation of the divine judgments which were to alight on the ungodly world. He had in these to do merely with "the inhabitants of the earth." It was impossible that he could continue to abide thus with merely general delineations. And, while he would now go more particularly into the victory of Christ and the overthrow of the world, he must, in the first instance, delineate more exactly the enemies of the church, and the authors of the persecution; so that the true nature of the conflict may come clearly to light, and the representation afterwards to be given of the victory may be rendered intelligible and edifying.

The preceding chapter had spoken of the persecution of the church by the dragon. Here, we learn, how he carries on the work, not by assuming a personal bodily form, but by preparing for himself a powerful instrument on earth—by rendering the heathen, and especially the Roman power, serviceable to his designs, and in it taking, as it were, flesh and blood.

The three enemies of God's kingdom, to which the whole group refers, are not co-ordinate with each other; but the second is the vassal and instrument of the first (ch. xiii. 2), and the the third is the abettor of the second (ch. xiii. 12.) The enemy, with which the saints have primarily and immediately to do, is the second. But this has an *invisible* head—the circumstance which makes the conflict with him so severe and dangerous—and a *visible* auxiliary.

The church should inevitably faint before these three formidable enemies, unless her Lord and Saviour had said: Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and the prince of it. This word forms the theme, which is enlarged upon in the following visions by the mouth of his servant John.

The arrangement of the section before us is the following. We are first presented in ch. xii. 18, xiii. 1, 2, with a full delineation of the enemy, in which his past, present, and future history, are brought together, precisely as in the case of the first enemy. Respect is also had to the past, in order to set the present in its true light—comp. on ch. xii. 2. The prophet sees a beast with seven heads and ten horns rise out of the sea, to which the dragon gives his strength, and his throne, and great power. Under this symbol is represented the God-opposing power of this world, in its seven phases—the seven being again subdivided. For, that the subject respects the power of the world, is put beyond a doubt by the diadems, the insignia of dominion on the horns; and the names of blasphemy on its heads leave as little room to doubt, that it is the power of the world in its state of enmity to God. And that by the several heads must be denoted the particular phases of this God-opposing power, is alone rendered probable by the consideration, that in the fundamental prophecy of Daniel (ch. vii.), the plurality of the world-powers is exhibited by a succession of different beasts, while here only one beast appears on the scene, combining the properties of all the beasts in Daniel. Not only so, but from the relation of the vision to that fundamental prophecy in Daniel, it is not to be imagined that an element of such importance should have been omitted. And if it exists, it can only be sought in the seven heads; these must denote the particular manifestations of the worldly power in its hostility to God, from Pharaoh down to Rome, the ungodly power

in the time of the prophet, and even to the new heathen power, which, according to his later announcements, is yet to tread in its footsteps.

The second part of the section, ver. 3—8, has respect to the state and action of the enemy during the time then present. The Seer beholds one of the heads of the beast, as it were, wounded to death—the ungodly Roman power having, along with the power of the world in general, received a deadly stroke through Him who said, "I have overcome the world;" through Him at whose feet all the kingdoms of the world must lie, because his kingdom is not of this world. But the deadly wound was again healed: the heathen state comes anew, at least apparently and for the time, to the possession of power, as the Seer found in his own experience. For, at the very time he saw the Revelation, he was banished by the Roman antichrist to the isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. The whole earth follows, as if nothing had happened, in wondering admiration anew after the beast, that appeared still to possess unbroken power, and this again is allowed to blaspheme and persecute, ver. 5; the former is represented at greater length in ver. 6, and the latter in ver. 7. Hence it more and more comes to pass, that the earth falls into two parties—the frightful majority of the worshippers of the beast, and the small flock of the Lamb that was slain, ver. 8. For the temptation is so great, that it can only be endured by virtue of an eternal election and of the blood of Christ; and a middle or indifferent position is impossible.

An admonitory conclusion, in ver. 9, 10, points the eye of the church, under these threatening and perilous circumstances, to the divine recompense, and charges her to wait for it in faith and patience.

Ch. xii. 18. *And I was placed upon the sand of the sea.* Ch. xiii. 1. *And I saw a beast ascend out of the sea, which had ten horns and seven heads, and upon its horns ten diadems, and upon its heads names of blasphemy.* In ch. xii. 18, there is found a remarkable variation in the text. For "I was placed," or, as it is more commonly rendered, "I stood," some authorities of importance have, "he stood," ἐστάθη. One cannot decide on *external* grounds between the two readings. (Bengel: "A letter

may easily have been either added, or dropt. The authorities for the two readings are nearly equal.") But the *internal* grounds are in favour of John and not the dragon being the subject of discourse. We have not here a continuation of ch. xii., but a new scene opens to our view: it is now represented through what medium Satan accomplishes what had already been described in ch. xii. But this being the case, the dragon would require to have been expressly named again. It must have been said: And the dragon stood. We should have expected, too, that the agency of the dragon in the beast's arising out of the sea, would have been distinctly mentioned. And, finally, the reference to John is confirmed by the fundamental passages, Dan. viii. 2, "And I beheld in the vision, and I was by the river Ulai," x. 4, "I was by the great river Tigris." According to these statements Daniel had visions beside great streams, which, corresponding to the sea in ch. vii. 2, were to him the symbol of the national masses, with whose movements and conflicts he was occupied. Besides, it is solely on account of the reading: he stood, that this verse has been attached to ch. xii., whereas it should have commenced the following chapter. Instead of: *I stood* (Luther), the meaning is more correctly: *I was placed.* John did not take up his own position, but he was set there—comp. ch. xvii. 3, "And he brought me in the spirit into the wilderness;" ch. iv. 1, "Come up hither, I will shew you what shall be hereafter," because wonderful things were to be seen there, which he was to communicate to the church.[1] John had not to leave his place in heaven, when he was made to stand by the sea. To be in heaven means to be in the Spirit; but John was set down in the Spirit beside the sea. Why the holy Seer had a position given him there, is sufficiently manifest from what follows. The sea, according to this, exhibited a remarkable spectacle. But it may be asked, why exactly the *sand* of the sea is mentioned. According to the common supposition the *sand* here simply denotes the *shore* of the sea. But the sand of the sea is never so employed. The expression always occurs elsewhere in the New Testament as a designation of a great multitude—comp. ch. xx. 8, "the number of which is as the sand of

[1] In ch. viii. 3, also, the passive retains its signification. The angel does not of his own accord place himself beside the altar, but he is placed there.

the sea," Rom. ix. 27 ; Hebr. xi. 12. In the Old Testament also it is usually employed in the same signification, Gen. xxii. 17 ; Isa. xlviii. 19 ; Job. vi. 3. In this sense also the sand is specified here, because it suggests the thought of the innumerable multitude of the inhabitants of the earth, on whose condition and destiny the beast, that was going to arise out of the sea, should exert an influence. The beast ascends *now* out of the sea, has not ascended *previously*. (Bengel : " It is to be noted, that *θηρίον* is said *ἀναβαῖνον* in the present, not *ἀναβεβηκός* in the past.") From this it has often been concluded, that the vision has respect entirely to what is future ; that the beast in John's time could have had no historical existence. But this is a very hasty conclusion. It rests upon an intermingling of the reality and the vision. What in the reality has for a long time existed already, may be seen in vision rising into existence anew, if the object is to give a summary view of the whole manifestation. Thus the first of the four beasts seen by Daniel, in ch. vii., rising not of the sea, denotes a kingdom (the Chaldean), which in the reality had for a long period occupied a place on the theatre of history. Indeed, the past as such is not the object of what is testified in the Revelation ; but that it may, on account of its connection with the present and the future, be drawn into the sphere embraced by the vision, is abundantly plain from ch. xii.—That the sea can only come into consideration here in the figurative sense, as designating the sea of peoples, the restless world (Bossuet : " The sea = the agitated state of human affairs"), is clear, first, from the common usage of the Apocalypse (comp. vi. 14, vii. 1, 3, viii. 8, x. 2, xvi. 3, xx. 13, xxi. 1) ; and, secondly, from the fundamental passage of Daniel, ch. vii. 2, " And behold the four winds of heaven strove on the great sea ;" Michaelis : " A symbol of restless nations ;" Hävernick : " A symbol of the restless, stirring agitation that exists out of God's kingdom." The point of comparison is, on the one hand, the multitudinous, and, on the other, the restless character of both ; comp. Ps. xciii. 3, 4, " The floods lift up, O Lord, the floods lift up their voice. More than the noise of many waters, than the glorious waves of the sea is the Lord glorious in the height ;" Ps. xlvi. 3, 4, on which it was remarked in my Commentary, " Seas and overflowing floods are not rarely an image of hostile masses of people, which take delight

in making conquests over the face of the earth (Isa. xvii. 12, viii. 7, 8; Jer. xlvii. 2, xlvi. 7.) But the image cannot have this import here. For here the mountains, the conquered kingdoms, are in the heart of the sea. Here the sea is rather the symbol of the world, the masses of people generally, which are kept in constant motion by their principle, their pride and ambition; comp. Isa. lvii. 20, 'The wicked are like a troubled sea, that cannot rest, and its waves cast up mire and dirt.'"—A *beast rises out of the sea.* The Greek *θηρίον* is properly beast in general (in Heb. xii. 20, it is used, where in the original passage, Ex. xix. 13, cattle are referred to); but it is employed to denote pre-eminently such beasts as have the bestial nature peculiarly prominent in them. It is used, for example, of wild ferocious beasts (comp. Acts xi. 6, where the beasts are distinguished from the four-footed creatures[1]), of serpents (Acts xxviii. 4, 5), or when it is intended to render what is beastly particularly prominent (as in Heb. xii. 20, where beasts are spoken of as contradistinguished from men.[2]) Of men, who are like beasts, the word is also used in Tit. i. 12. What is there figure, is here symbol. The point of comparison here is by no means simply the attribute of wildness, ferocity—for were this alone to be taken into accouut, the bridge would be broken down that connects the first and the second beast; nor can we understand how the gentle-looking false prophet should appear under the symbol of a beast. It must rather be regarded as standing generally in the want of the divine image, which at the threshold of Revelation, in Gen. i. 26, 27, is represented as the properly and distinctively human—the want of the living breath of God, the ascendancy of the flesh, carnality and corruption. This is also what comes prominently into view in Tit. i. 12, where the same persons who are called "evil beasts," are, at the same time, represented as "foul bellies," being under the dominion of their lusts and passions. A brutal, wild and savage character, is only a peculiar manifestation of that beastly nature, which here

1 Xenoph. Cyrop. I. 4, 16: *ἀκούων οὖν ἐν τοῖς μεθορίοις τοῖς τε αὐτῶν καὶ τοῖς Μήδων πολλὰ θηρία εἶναι ἅτε ἀθήρευτα ὄντα διὰ τὸν πόλεμον*; the *θηρία* here correspond to the *ἄγρια θηρία* of Callmi. in his h. in Dianam, v. 12.

2 Plato in Steph. Thes. connects *ἀνθρώπων καὶ θεῶν καὶ θηρίων*, then *θηρία τε καὶ βοτά*.

especially comes into consideration. Still, by no means that alone; as much, and even more, godlessness, hatred of the true God, and what springs out of him. Bengel incorrectly remarks: "Its being called a beast, is in itself not a matter of reproach. In Daniel, under the images of strong beasts, the different worldly kingdoms are represented. But all depends on the circumstance, how in the sequel this beast may conduct himself." The subsequent behaviour of the beast is the simple indication of its nature. Because it is a beast, it behaves in a bestial manner. In Daniel it is not kingdoms generally, but worldly, godless, irreligious kingdoms, that are represented under the image of the beasts. Otherwise, the kingdom of God itself should have appeared under the image of a beast. It is said there in ch. vii. 17, "Four kings shall arise *out of the earth.*" The designation of beasts corresponds with this origin. The earthly disposition and the bestial nature go hand in hand. That the kings or kingdoms in Daniel are called beasts in contrast to *men*, as a designation of their low state of feeling, is clear from Dan. vii. 45, where it is said of the first beast, "And it was taken from off the earth, and set upon two feet as a *man*, and a *man's heart* was given it." Misfortune there changes the beast into a man. The expression is remarkable, "It was taken from off the earth," from that to which it had hitherto belonged as a four-footed creature. A mind directed toward the earth thus appears as the characteristic of a beast. The change is the same with that, which at an earlier period passed upon Nebuchadnezzar, in whose *personal* history the fate of his empire was imaged. In his career of ambition and pride, which rose through prosperity to the highest pitch, the human heart was taken away, and a beastly heart was given him. As a punishment for this he was reduced to the condition of a beast in intellect and outward appearance —comp. ch. iv. 13. "And at the end of the days," it is said in ver. 34, "I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me, and I blessed the Most High. And I praised and lauded him, who lives for ever, whose dominion is everlasting, and his kingdom is from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing." Here it appears as the characteristic of man, to lift the eyes (adoringly) to heaven, to praise and glorify the Most

High, in contrast to the senseless indifference toward the divine, or presumptuous hatred of it, as connected with the condition of a beast. The beast in the passage before us is a compound of the several beasts in Daniel. If by these the more prominent phases of the ungodly power of the world are represented, the beast here can be nothing else than that power in its *entireness*. Farther, as the seven heads of the beast are, according to ch. xvii. 9, 10, seven ungodly kingdoms, which follow one another in succession, so the beast, that bears these heads, can only indicate the ungodly power of the world in general. Bengel says, "It is the same beast with ten horns and seven heads, which is described in ch. xiii. and xvii. According to ch. xvii. the beast is most closely and particularly connected with the city Rome." But there it is also very pointedly *distinguished* from Rome; and the remark of Bossuet, "It is the Roman empire, or, more properly, Rome herself, the mistress of the world, pagan and the persecutor of the saints," must be rejected as altogether erroneous. The beast *carries* the great whore Babylon (ch. xvii. 3, 7);. Rome is only the possessor for the time of the ungodly power of the world. The Roman empire is not the beast itself, but only a particular head of it, which five others precede, and one follows. It is said in ch. xi. 7, "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast, that arises out of the abyss, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and shall kill them." And in like manner also in ch. xvii. 8, the subject of discourse is the beast, that arises out of the abyss. That in these passages the discourse is not of another beast, or of a different ascending of this beast, is clear from ch. xiii. 7, where the enigmatical announcement in ch. xi. 7 is again resumed, and introduced at its proper place: "And it was given to the beast to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." If the statement in ch. xi. 7 were to be separated from ch. xiii., it must swim in the air. The arising out of the sea, and the arising out of the abyss, are not counter-representations, but only two aspects of the matter, very closely connected together. The beast could not arise out of the abyss without, at the same time, arising out of the sea, nor out of the sea without also coming out of the abyss. The abyss is hell, the seat of Satan—comp. on ch. ix. 1. *There* is the original source of all evil on earth, the fountainhead of all

that erects itself in opposition to God and his kingdom. From thence also the beast proceeds, although it comes more immediately out of the sea. The dragon, that gives to him his power, and his throne, and his great authority, is the moving agent in his ascending from the sea. From the relation of this section to ch. xiii., nothing can happen in it in which the dragon does not form the background. Even in ch. xii. 3, Satan appears as the moving force of the conquering world-power, which lifts itself up against the kingdom of God; so that hell was to be regarded as its original seat. These two sides are so far from being contrary to each other, that a third is rather to be added to them. The beast, which immediately arises out of the sea, more remotely out of hell, comes down also from heaven, as the angel of the abyss in ch. ix. 11 is, at the same time, the star from heaven in ch. ix. 1. Nothing comes out of the abyss and the sea, which does not at the same time come from heaven—comp. the emphatically repeated "It was given to him," in ver. 5, 7.

The beast has *ten horns and seven heads.* The reading: seven heads and ten horns, which Luther follows, is but weakly supported, and has obviously flowed from ch. xvii. 3, 7, xii. 3, where the heads precede the horns. It is clear, besides, from these parallel passages, and from the nature of the case—since the horns could only be found upon one of the heads—that the horns are here named before the heads, simply because John here sees the beast come up, and consequently beholds the horns before the heads. The investigation, therefore, has first to do with the heads, and then with the horns. A clear note of explanation as to what we must understand by the heads, is given in ch. xvii. 9: "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits, and are seven kings." Mountains are the common symbol of kingdoms. The symbolical expression is explained by the proper one: seven kings, or kingdoms. So that the seven heads of the beast are seven phases of the ungodly power of the world. "Ten horns," remarks Bengel, "were already described in Daniel, but here we have somewhat new in the seven heads." The vision in Daniel, ch. vii., should have kept the church at once from too rash hopes, and from gloomy despair. The tyranny of the world, under which she then sighed, was still not the last. A series of other phases of the ungodly

power of the world was still to follow, which were to lie heavy upon her. But a clear light beams forth at the further end of her dark journey. The kingdom, the power, and the dominion under the whole heaven, shall at last be given to the saints of the Most High. Daniel has represented in that vision the variety of phases belonging to the world-power, from his own times, by the number of beasts in the vision. John, on the other hand, saw the whole of the ungodly power under the image of one beast, while he represents the variety of its phases under the image of the heads of this beast. Still, even in Daniel there is not wanting some indication of this plurality of heads. It is said, in ch. vii. 6, "After this I looked, and behold another beast like a leopard, and it had four wings on its sides, and four heads, and the dominion was given to it." The four phases of the third monarchy, the Grecian, are here symbolized by the four heads of the third beast—see my Beitr. I., p. 203. The heads manifestly denote so many parts, principal divisions of the monarchy—see Gen. i. 10. The seven heads are visible at once. In Daniel also, ch. vii. 3, the four great beasts arise simultaneously out of the sea. At least no word is used to denote a *successive* appearance. The succession is indicated, not by sequence of time, but by local position. The beast which Daniel sees *immediately* before him, represents the then existing kingdom of the Chaldeans. It was fit, that to him (as now also to St John) the whole of the manifestation should be presented from its commencement, that he might be able to view the particular parts in relation to the whole. Bengel's remark: "the beast, on his rising out of the sea, has the seven heads one after another," is true, only in so far as the one after another is referred to the historical manifestation of the beast, not to the symbolical representation of it here set before us. Viewed in reference to the latter, the heads exist together. How, otherwise, could the horns, which belong to the last head, be seen on his first rising up? The beast has, so to speak, but one active head at any particular time; the others have only either a historical or a prophetical import. This is clear from ch. xiii. 3, compared with ver. 12, 14. According to the first passage, one of the beast's heads is wounded to death, and the deadly wound is healed. According to the two others, the wound and healing

are spoken of as belonging to *the beast himself*. Hence it plainly follows, that the beast can have no existence separate from his heads (excepting only an ideal one), as may indeed be understood of itself.—We have now to consider the question: How are the seven worldly, God-opposing powers, denoted by the seven heads of the beast, to be determined? The determination of four of them may be quite easily ascertained from Daniel: the Chaldean, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman kingdoms. So also may a fifth, the seventh head with ten horns. This consists of the ten ungodly kings or kingdoms, which, according to Dan. vii., were to arise out of the fourth monarchy. Since these five, according to Daniel and the Apocalypse, were to extend to the final ceasing of the ungodly power of the world, or the state of heathendom; since, further, at the time of the sixth head or king this prophecy was given, according to ch. xvii. 10, shewing the sixth to be the Roman, the first and the second heads must therefore be sought for in the time that preceded the Chaldean empire. Now, if we take into account the twofold element of world-dominion, and of hostility to the kingdom of God, the conclusion can be neither difficult nor doubtful. We can think only of Egypt and Assyria. The collocation of the two as the pre-Chaldean worldly powers, that oppressed the kingdom of God, is of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament—comp. Isa. lii. 4, 5, "For, thus saith the Lord of hosts, my people went down aforetime into Egypt, to sojourn there (and suffered violence); and the Assyrian (afterwards) oppressed them without cause. And now what shall I do here (in respect to the Chaldean desolation); for my people is taken away for nought; their rulers howl, and my name continually every day is blasphemed." So also are Egypt and Assyria coupled together in Isa. x. 24—26, xi. 11—16, xix. 23, xxvii. 13; Hos. ix. 3, xi. 11; Jer. ii. 18, 36; Zech. x. 10, 11, where Egypt and Assyria, as the most dangerous enemies in earlier times, appear as the types of the present and future oppressors of God's people, as both had also been used in Isa. xxvii. 13, and Hosea. The Apocalypse is in unison with Zechariah, as well as Daniel, as to the determination of the ungodly powers of the world. That prophet, who lived under the Persian tyranny, sees in ch. ii. 1—4, four horns, which denote the enemies of God's kingdom—the four hostile worldly powers, corresponding to the

four corners of heaven, under whose oppression Israel had sighed, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia.

Horns, in the symbolical language of Scripture, denote power —comp. on ch. v. 6. Accordingly the ten horns can only be ten powers. We are furnished with the means of a more exact determination of the ten horns by ch. xvii. 12, "And the ten horns, which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive power as kings one hour with the beast." From this we perceive, that the ten horns are ten kings; that is, kingdoms. They are set upon the seventh head, as will afterwards be more fully proven. It is thus indicated, that the seventh phase of the ungodly world-power should be a divided one, while all the preceding ones bore the impress of oneness. The original passage is Dan. vii. 7—24. There, the ten horns are the ten kingdoms, into which the fourth power, the Roman, is split. Bengel remarks: "With the ten horns here the case is different. For, in John the horns are overcome together in the last period of the beast; but in Daniel the horns are overcome at a much earlier stage, and not together, but one after another. The little horn, with the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, which Daniel saw on the fourth beast, has become in John a separate beast, and bears respect especially to the latter times of this beast, as the similarity of the description in the two prophets implies; it respects what concerns the overthrow of the horn or beast." But the ten horns in Daniel correspond entirely to the ten horns in John; in both alike they denote the kingdoms, which were to spring out of the Roman empire. The only difference consists in the *little horn;* by which we are not, with many expositors, to understand an individual. If the ten horns in Daniel represent not persons, but kingdoms, then neither can the *eleventh* signify an individual, but only a power. This little horn is wanting in the Revelation, in which the beast comes to an end, on the overthrow of the ten kings by Christ. But it re-appears afterwards under another form—not as Bengel, misled by a wrong interpretation, imagined, as "a separate beast"—but at the close as Gog and Magog—see vol. i., p. 478. There is a further difference, that Daniel does not expressly mention, as is done in the Revelation, the victory of God and Christ over the kingdoms represented by the ten

horns, that were to arise out of the fourth great monarchy, and their conversion to Christianity. Nor does he give any indication of the thousand years' reign of Christ. The Apocalypse has here, in suitable accordance with its later origin, filled up a very important hiatus in Daniel. Daniel fixes his eye simply on the final victory, John describes also the victory that should precede. This second difference carries along with it the first as a necessary consequence. As soon as the thousand years, which intervene between the last enemy but one of Christianity and the last enemy of all, came into view, it no longer appeared suitable, to unite them into one symbolical figure. It seemed more appropriate, to make the beast with his ten horns perish, and to give to the last ungodly power a separate name and an independent position.—The beast has on his horns *ten diadems;* on his heads *names of blasphemy.* The description is first given of what was on the horns, though they belong only to the seventh head; because on the beast's rising out of the sea it was these that first became visible, and hence in the preceding context they had been mentioned first. That the *heads* bore diadems as well as the horns, is evident on a comparison of ch. xii. 3, "A great red dragon, which had seven heads and ten horns, and upon his *heads* seven diadems." The diadems, which Satan there possesses, belong to him only as a reflection of his agent on earth—the beast. The same point is also manifest from ch. xix. 12: the many diadems, which Christ is there represented as wearing on his head, have a polemical reference to the diadems on the heads of the beast. And, finally, it is manifest from ch. xvii. 9, where it is said, that the seven heads are seven kings: the diadem is the insignia of royal dignity, and where such dignity is, there the diadem must also be. Diadems are not expressly mentioned in connection with the heads, merely because the names of blasphemy lead to the same result. As in the case of Christ the many diadems, and the name "King of kings, and Lord of lords," go hand in hand (ch. xix. 12, 16), so is it also in the case of the beast. The names of blasphemy refer to the assumed supremacy over the world, and consequently involve the existence of the diadems. In like manner, the diadems involve the existence of the names of blasphemy. For, that the horns do not hold the kingly dominion signified by them in fief from God, is evident

alone from the circumstance, that the horns belong to the beast, whose very nature is godlessness, rebellion, presumption, and blasphemy. According to ch. xvii. 3, the whole beast, with its heads and horns, is full of the names of blasphemy. As there the names of blasphemy belong in common to the horns and the heads, so here the diadems upon the horns are to be taken positively and not *exclusively*, as if we ought to change the "*and* upon his heads," into a *but*. The names of blasphemy are concealed behind the crowns, and the diadems behind the names of blasphemy. It might have stood thus: and upon his ten horns names of blasphemy, and upon his seven heads diadems; or: and upon his ten horns and upon his seven heads diadems and names of blasphemy. The diadems, however, are made to precede the names of blasphemy, to define more exactly the sphere of the latter; to indicate that the blasphemy consists in the assumption of independent sovereignty. What the name of blasphemy is, we learn from ch. xix. 12, 16. The name, which belongs to Christ and to him *alone*: "*King of kings, and Lord of lords*," is usurped by him. He sets himself forth as the independent lord of the world, the god of this earth. Every name is a name of blasphemy,[1] by which the creature makes an inroad into the territory of God, lays claim to an independent greatness. Nor will it make any material difference, if in this he concedes a certain homage to his idols; for these are but the reflections and objective aspects of his proper self, which, in process of time, continually takes back more and more of what it yielded to them. As this, however, may be done in ignorance, the blasphemy then only reaches its full height, when the person has come into a conscious relation to the living God, and in opposition to his, "I am the Lord," has put forth the impious counter-assertion, I am the Lord. Pharaoh had been long calling himself the lord of the world, but it was then for the first time that he was guilty of blasphemy, when he said, "'Who is the Lord, that I should

[1] It is difficult to decide between the two readings ὄνομα and ὀνόματα. The singular may have been derived from a comparison of ch. xix. 12, 16. The plural is favoured by διαδήματα and by ch. xvii. 3, where the beast is described as γέμον ὀνομάτων βλασφεμίας. But then the plural may also have sprung from this consideration. If the singular is the original form, then it will indicate, from its position, that one and the same name of blasphemy was set upon each head; that is, according to ch. xix. 16, the name "King of kings, and Lord of lords.

hearken to his voice, and let the people go?" It was then only that the title "lord of the world," being uttered in a different tone, and with a polemical feeling, became in the full sense a name of blasphemy. Rome and its emperor had for a long period already assumed the proud title, but the blasphemy never reached its consummation, till this assumption came to be directed immediately against God, his Son and his church. That the idea of blasphemy is to be understood thus here, is clear from ver. 6. According to this the blasphemy pre-supposes, that God has a name; that he has come forth from his secrecy, and manifested himself; the unknown, nameless God cannot be blasphemed.

Ver. 2. *And the beast which I saw, was like a panther, and his feet as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority.* The description of the beast's form rests on Daniel, ch. vii.; and Daniel again has respect to Jer. v. 6, "Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf out of the deserts shall spoil them; and a panther shall watch upon their cities; every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces; because their transgressions are many, and they are hardened in their disobedience." Daniel only so far differs from Jeremiah, that in his representation of the earthly powers, that should desolate the people of God, by means of wild beasts, he substitutes the bear for the wolf. The form of the beast here is compounded of the different beasts in Daniel; quite naturally so, since the beast here images the ungodly power of the world *as a whole*, while in Daniel the *different phases* of this power are represented. A return is in some degree made to the simplicity of the fundamental passage in Jeremiah, where the lion, the wolf, and the panther, are also employed to represent the power of the world as a whole, and form, so to speak, a composite animal. Of the four beasts of Daniel, only the three first enter into the composition of the beast before us. For, the common supposition, that the ten horns here may belong to the fourth beast, is hardly tenable. The ten horns are not introduced here into the description of the beast's form, which only begins with this verse; and in Daniel the ten horns stand in so loose and outward a relation to the fourth beast, that they cannot be regarded as a distinguishing characteristic of it—the less

so, since in the Revelation they are not ascribed to the *sixth* head, which corresponds to the fourth beast in Daniel, but are set upon the *seventh* head, so that the connexion, already of a loose nature in Daniel, is completely dissolved by John. Several have sought to explain the fact of John's confining himself to the three first beasts, on the supposition, that even in Daniel the fourth beast is composed of the peculiar features of the three first; so that the beast in John would thus be an exact image of the fourth beast in Daniel. But this is an entirely groundless assumption. Not the smallest trace is to be found in Daniel of the fourth beast having been compounded of the three first. We must rather, therefore, seek the reason of the fact referred to in the circumstance, that only the three first beasts in Daniel have a definite form attributed to them. The fourth beast could not form part of the representation here, because nothing farther is said of it in Daniel, than that it was indescribably dreadful.—The order in which the beasts succeed each other, is here exactly reversed: in Daniel the lion, the bear, the panther—here the panther, the bear, the lion. If we could be justified in taking into account the ten horns, we might think of it as an explanation of the arrangement adopted here, that now Daniel's fourth beast had come into the foreground, now the beast bore the woman, Rome, on its back—see ch. xvii. 7. But, as we must exclude all consideration of the ten horns, there remains but one way of explaining the deviation from the order in Daniel; which is, that if it had been retained, one would very naturally have supposed that the particular elements in the composite beast, like the different beasts in Daniel, indicated definite phases of the power of the world in the order here mentioned. Since the order, however, is reversed, no one can fail to see that nothing depends on it—that the object of the description is merely to pourtray the nature of the ungodly power of the world—that panther, lion, bear, equally belong to Egypt, Babylon, Rome. The different phases also could not be denoted here by the particular animals entering into the composition of the beast, because John has enlarged the sphere; does not, like Daniel, begin with Babylon, the ungodly power in existence at the time the prophet lived, but goes back to Egypt; so that the bestial forms in Daniel were found insufficient for him, when he was going to

apply them to the same purpose.—In the case of all the three beasts, we have only to take into consideration their property as creatures of a savage and blood-thirsty disposition. The *panther* cannot, as Vitringa supposes, denote "nations of different languages and manners," on account of its spotted appearance; nor can it, as Bossuet conceives, be "the symbol of instability;" for everywhere in Scripture, when the panther is spoken of, respect is had only to its terrible and savage energy—see Hab. i. 8; Hos. xiii. 7; Isa. xi. 6. The *bear* cannot denote "steadfastness in purposes and undertakings;" for in Daniel the call is addressed to the bear, "Arise, devour much flesh." (Jerome on Hos. xiii. 8, "Those who have written on the natures of animals say, that among all wild beasts, none are more savage than the bear, when it is hungry.") Of each beast, that part is taken which more especially manifests its mischievous and frightful nature. In its main bulk, in all excepting the head and feet, the beast resembles a panther. The dark-spotted body of this animal, from which it has its name in Hebrew (נמר, in Arabic, to be spotted), is an emblem of spiritual staining. We have the interpretation in Jer. xiii. 23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard (panther) his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil;" on which Hitzig remarks: "the swarthy complexion of the Ethiopian, and the spots of the panther, are the emblems of sinfulness, and of blemishes of a moral kind." The beast has the feet of the *bear*. These have also been particularly referred to in Daniel: "The other beast was like a bear, and stood upon one side;" Havernick: "It stood higher upon the one side than the other, manifestly the posture of assault." In attacking, the bear uses especially his fore-paws; while with the lion it is the mouth which especially inspires terror.—To the beast formed after this manner the dragon gives his power, and his throne, and great authority. The dragon is a name applied to Satan, only when the Old Testament description of the earthly world-power is transferred to him. The dragon is not Satan generally, but Satan in a particular relation, *as the prince of this world*—see on ch. xii. 3. Accordingly, the throne of the dragon is only his dominion upon earth. The throne of the dragon is, at the same time, the throne of the beast in ch. xvi. 10; for the dragon exercises his

dominion on earth by means of the beast. It could not, indeed, have been put in this form: Satan gave him. For, Satan has never given up to the beast his whole power, dominion, and authority. The *power* is the natural power, consisting in the great number of retainers, fulness of earthly resources, and such like; the *throne* is worldly supremacy; and the *authority* is its assumed right to command whatever it might please. A remarkable coincidence exists between these words and what is written both in the gospel of St John and the earlier gospels. They have this in common with John's gospel, that Satan bears a distinct name as the animating principle of the ungodly power of the world—there the prince of this world, here the dragon. In Matt. iv. 8, 9, the devil takes Christ along with him to a very high mountain, and shews him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and says to him: "All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." What Satan here gives to the beast, he there promises to Christ. And this, even apart from the passage before us, cannot be understood otherwise than as importing that Satan only promised what he was able in certain circumstances to secure. For, if we were to explain the promise of Satan as an empty boast, the temptation of Christ would be a thing unworthy of him. The addition made to the words of the devil in the evangelist Luke (ch. iv. 6), are remarkable: "All this power will I give thee and the glory of them; for that is delivered to me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it." Olshausen observes: "The expression, 'it is *delivered* to me,' contains a striking note of contrariety to the doctrine of an independent principle of evil; the prince of this world has *received* all from God, to whom alone belongs the glory as the eternal and universal Ruler." In the passage before us also the power and authority which is given by Satan, is not an independent, but a derived one,—one that comes from hell, but, at the same time, descends from heaven; as the angel of the abyss in ch. ix. 11, is identical with the star from heaven. The gift of Satan is subject to divine direction, and not merely to divine permission. Satan here also is but a servant of God. Not only is the sovereign power itself of God, but its abuse also is of him, when turned to lawless conquest or to the cruel persecution of the church, which requires to be chastised for her sins, exercised

under the cross, perfected through sufferings, and prepared for her destiny.

Ver. 3. *And (I saw) one of his heads as*[1] *killed to death, and the stroke of his death was healed. And the whole earth wondered after the beast.* The verb, *I saw,* is but feebly supported, and has manifestly been of late introduction. The accusative depends on the "I saw" of ver. 1, as is the case also in ch. iv. 4, vii. 9. But the omission of the "I saw" here, is both intentional and significant. It indicates, that the beast even when it rose into view (not in a historical, but a symbolical or visionary respect—two appearances which are here again confounded with each other by Bengel), bore on it the marks of the wound. Had the wounding and the healing belonged to the period after its rising, the "I saw" could not have been omitted. —The head, as it appeared to John, had already been restored: he did not see first the wounding, and then the healing. It is only thus that he could see the head as wounded to death; that is, with the scar of a perfectly mortal wound. That the *as* must be understood in this manner, is evident from the corresponding expression in ch. v. 6, "a lamb as it had been slain." One might perceive, he had once been slain, since he bore upon him the scar of a perfectly mortal wound, such as a mark going round the throat, plainly indicating that the head had been cut off.—The wound here spoken of is a wound, which had really brought death—not, as the embarrassment of interpreters has led them to suppose, merely of a dangerous, though not actually mortal wound. The expression plainly imports what we understand by it. It signifies, not wounded, but *killed.* By *killing* is always denoted a violent death—comp. 1 John iii. 12; Rev. v. 9, vi. 4, 9, xviii. 24, and ver. 8 of this chapter. Neither in Scripture nor elsewhere is it used of *wounding.* Further, the stroke[2] of his death can only be the stroke, which had death for its result. The supposition, that the stroke of his death stands for his deadly stroke, as a Hebraistic mode of expression, is not confirmed by

[1] We must read ὡς, and not ὡσεί with Tischendorf. The latter never occurs in the Apoc.; see on ch. i. 14.

[2] The word πληγή, which occurs with great frequency in the Apocalypse, is always stroke, plague, not wound. The simple πληγή here corresponds to πληγὴ τῆς μαχαίρας in ver. 14. What is meant is the stroke of his death, which Michael gave him with his sharp sword; see ch. xii. 7.

any certain analogy in the New Testament. That the head was actually killed, is clear from ch. xvii. 8, by which the beast again rises out of the abyss, hell, which it could only have done if it had already been sent thither. It also appears, from ch. xvii. 11, which says, that the beast was and is not. The representation in ver. 14, too, of its having become alive again, confirms the view of an actual death having taken place. And the parallelism with the once slain, and again resuscitated lamb, points to the same conclusion, that the head, and along with it the beast had really been killed.—The answer to the question, *which* head it was that John saw slain to death, and again healed, is furnished by ch. xvii. 10. According to that passage, the head, which the beast bore in the time of Christ and John, was the *sixth*, or the Roman empire. Since the deadly stroke, as the following investigation will shew, was inflicted on the beast through the atonement of Christ, this is the only head that can be thought of.—*Whence comes the stroke?* According to the immediately preceding context the beast stands in the nearest connection with the dragon. It is this dragon that gives him his power, and his throne, and his authority; he is the *vice-dragon*, the deputy of the prince of this world. Whatever, therefore, brings destruction to the dragon, or to Satan in his relation to the world, whatever injures his dominion, must also inflict on the beast a deadly wound. Now, we read in ch. xii. (to which in the first instance we turn, as the epochs of the beast must correspond to those of the dragon), of a great and severe discomfiture which Satan, as the possessor of this world's power, received through Christ and his atonement. It was there already remarked regarding the overthrow described in ver. 9, "The great dragon stands at the head, even before the old serpent, because Satan comes here into view precisely as the prince of this world, as the animating principle of the ungodly world-power, which in the Old Testament is represented under the symbol of the dragon." To this fact in the history of the dragon, there must be a corresponding one to be set along with it in the history of the beast. It is too essential and important a matter to be omitted in the history of the beast. From what the prince of this world experienced, we must explain what befel his instrument; the rather so, because, otherwise, the latter would possess a quite abrupt and

enigmatical character, and we should be thrown upon mere conjecture respecting it—to which we never can be left in the Apocalypse, and in reality never are so. Where this *seems* to be the case, the fault always lies in the misapprehension of the expositor. We are led also to the same result by the close connection which, according to ver. 4, the dragon and the beast hold to each other. Men worship the dragon, because he gives his power to the beast. Hence, whatever destroys the power of the dragon, must also be fatal to the beast. Further, we learn from what quarter the wound comes, when we are told, that the beast, after his deadly wound was healed, magnifies himself in deeds of blasphemy and violence against Christ and his church. Whither the *revenge* displays itself, from thence has the injury been received. The assault, renewed after fresh strength had been obtained, can only be directed against him, from whom the discomfiture had proceeded. In ch. xii. 12, sq. also the dragon continues to make war on him, who had overcome him. Still farther, when we regard Christ as the author of the deadly wound, we come to see, how this wound, which is here ascribed to a single head, is in ver. 12, 14, and even in our verse itself,[1] ascribed to the whole beast; and how, in ch. xvii. 8, the beast can be said to have ceased to exist. The victory of Christ affected the ungodly power of Rome not as such, but only as a part of the ungodly power of the world in general. All other discomfitures but this bore only a *partial* character; they could but affect a single head of the beast, and not the beast as a whole. It is the one event in the world's history, by which the whole beast was smitten in the one head; whereas, in former times, the overthrow of one head was immediately followed by the rising up of another. From what has been said, the beast must already have existed at the time of our Lord's death. For, by means of the atonement then effected, one of his heads was wounded to death. This alone serves for a refutation of those, who would understand by the beast a power, that did not arise till a much later period—the Papacy. The *healing* of the beast, though but apparent and temporary, lay as a dreadful burden upon John himself. The Lord had said,

[1] The ἀυτοῦ, which refers, not to the head, but to the beast, shows that the deadly stroke had affected the whole beast, as well as the head; and, as already stated, the beast has always but one active head at a time.

"Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;" and "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out." Yet still Antipas had been killed, where Satan had his seat, and John was in the isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Those also, to whom he wrote, were companions in the tribulation of Jesus Christ. So that it seemed as if nothing whatever had happened. Truly it was a time for the Seer to stand upon his watch-tower, to see what the Lord should say to him, and what he should answer to his reproof. —What follows the expression, "was healed," does not refer to the beast in general, but has especial respect to the time, when the head of the beast was healed, after he had received the deadly wound. This appears not only from the natural progress of the narration, but also and more especially from the circumstance, that in ver. 8 the future is substituted for the preterite; while in ch. xvii. 8 it is "they that dwell on the earth shall wonder," here the corresponding expression is, "they that dwell on the earth wondered"—a proof that transactions are referred to, which were even then in the course of taking place. The practical conclusion in ver. 9, 10, points also to the same result.—The wondering astonishment (comp. ch. xvii. 8) with which the earth follows the beast, comes not merely in spite of the *death*, but also *on account of the healing*—see on ver. 12, 14. A sad presentiment, that it was over with the ungodly power of this world, accompanied the preaching of Christ's gospel even through the heathen world. From this feeling alone can we explain the rage of persecution. "Nothing," says Züllig, "awoke more astonishment and greater faith, in respect to the Messiah, than his resurrection after he had been killed." Nor was it otherwise in the case of the beast, the earthly power of heathendom. The new life which it displayed, the success that attended its persecutions, the helpless prostration of the church, were all contrary to the expectations of its own adherents, who had not merely heard the external report of Christ's victory, but had also felt the truth of it in their consciences.

Ver. 4. *And worshipped the dragon,*[1] *because he gave the*

1 The proper reading is τῷ δράκοντι and τὸ θηρίον. Bengel long ago remarked, "τῷ δράκοντι, a middle reading, since what follows is τὸ θηρίον; whence some have put the accusative, and others the dative, twice." Προσκυνεῖν is in like manner construed variously with the dat. and the accus. in John iv. 21; Rev. xiv. 9, 11, xx. 4.

power to the beast, and worshipped the beast: Who is like the beast! and who can make war with him! Bengel remarks, "Those, who regarded the beast as deserving of adoration, at the same time worshipped the dragon, without being themselves conscious of it. This was very agreeable to the dragon. Those who despise the Son of God, despise also the Father, although they are not aware of it. And there is the same connection on the other side in regard to the worship of the beast and the dragon." This representation, however, has arisen merely from the embarrassment in which the worship of the dragon involves those who understand by the beast the Papacy. We cannot here think of a worshipping of the dragon simply in the beast. For it is expressly said, that they worshipped the dragon because he gave. In the kind of worship paid, therefore, a distinction was observed between the giver of the power and the bearer of it. We are rather to hold, that they worshipped the dragon under the form of an idolatrous service, which, according to ch. ix. 20, has a demoniacal, Satanic background. The property of being *incomparable* belongs only to God—see Ex. xv. 11; Ps. lxxxix. 7; Isa. xl. 18—and to Christ, who is connected with him by oneness of nature, and appears in the Revelation under the name of Michael, "who is like God," (Rev. xii. 7.) They make the beast, to which the dragon gives his power, or the beast in his connection with the dragon, a Michael, and scornfully challenge the *true* Michael and his servants to measure themselves with him. They were allured to this folly by seeing the beast stand before them in renovated strength. God had raised Christ from the dead, and had thereby powerfully revived the hopes of his prostrate church, and filled her with buoyant and victorious energy. A similar wonder seemed now to be wrought by the dragon in favour of the beast. This also celebrated a resurrection, and hence the jubilee-shout of his adherents rose so high: Who is like the beast, and who can make war with him?

Ver. 5. *And a mouth was given him, which spoke great things and blasphemies,*[1] *and power was given him to do*[2] *forty*

1 Instead βλασφημίας several, whom Luther follows, have βλασφημίαν, from ver. 6; others βλάσφημα; Bengel: ob μεγάλα.

2 Many copyists have found themselves unable to comprehend the elliptical and Hebraistic ποιῆσαι. Hence they have either dropt the word out, or they have shoved in before it πολεμον, taken from ver. 7.

and two months. The expression, there was given, is very consolatory. The word, "what hast thou, which thou hast not received," holds here also; if it is the true God who moves the tongues of his enemies, and wields their arms, it can be no *real* evil, so far as the church is concerned, it can only be a concealed good, which he gives to the enemy; in his own time he will again resume what he has taken; so that the loud cry, "Who is like the beast?" can no longer occasion bitter tears, but should only be matter for derision. It is not without meaning, that the "It was given" is so frequently repeated in this chapter. It appears in three pairs; two of which belong to the first beast ver. 5 and 7, and one to the second, ver. 14, 15.—We are taught by the analogy of the second part of the verse not to think, in respect to the giving of the inclination to blaspheme, but only of the liberty granted for the indulgence of this inclination by God, who could with one stroke have brought the beast to the ground (Ex. ix. 15, 16), or the presenting of such conditions as were necessary to its being indulged. De Wette is of opinion: "*We* would say, It was permitted him to speak; but that according to the style of Scripture the permission of God is considered as a doing." The idea, however, of mere permission, is not worthy of Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being; who has our breath and all our ways in his hand; without whom we cannot so much as lift our arm or our tongue. Such an idea places the creature in a certain, though limited independence, beside his Creator.—The simple *doing* forms an antithesis to the *speaking.* What was to be done is more specifically described in ver. 7.[1]—In Dan. vii. 8, 20, a mouth is attributed to the little horn speaking great things; here *blasphemies* are also added. We have a specimen of these blasphemies in the words: "Who is like the beast, and who can make war with him," spoken in the Lord's presence, and before his anointed and his church.—The *forty and two months* have already occurred, in ch. xi. 2 (comp. xii. 6, 14), as the signature of *the world's dominion over the*

1 The *doing* is not put for *acting*, but it is used elliptically, as עשה very frequently is, for example, Ps. xxii. 31, xxxvii. 5, lii. 10; Dan. viii. 12, 24, xi. 7, 30, to which passages of Daniel allusion is here made—and the object is to be supplied from the context: what he wished; or still better: what the mouth spake. Here no indication is as yet given of the object of the doing (though that may be gathered from the connection in which it stands with the *speaking*), but the doing itself is put in contradistinction to the speaking.

church, or of the temporary subjection of the people of God. It shall last only forty-two months—so should the church say[1] (comp. what was said at ch. ii. 10, on "Ye shall have tribulation ten days"), whenever power is given to the beast over them; and with that silence natural reason, which, as soon as it sees no human means of help at hand, is ready to exclaim, "All is lost!" The world has nothing, which has not been given to it by the Lord of the church, and in its rage against the church, there is still a prescribed period set to it, even when the church has been brought to the lowest condition, and that period not a long one. While the forty and two months continue, the saying of our Lord, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," goes into fulfilment; but at the close the comforting assurance stands fast, "I have overcome the world."—The relation of the verse before us to ver. 6 and 7, was correctly settled by Vitringa. We have here the general plan, there the filling up, first in reference to the *mouth*, ver. 6, then in reference to the *doing*, ver. 7.

Ver. 6. *And he opened his mouth in blasphemy*[2] *against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and those that dwell in heaven.* Bengel: "Blasphemy against God is elsewhere said to be committed in three different ways: when anything is attributed to him, which is contrary to his holiness; when anything is disowned that rightfully belongs to him; and when anything is ascribed to the creatures, which belongs to him alone." The *name of God* (St John makes very frequent mention of the name of God and of Christ), is the product of his *acts* (comp. on ch. xi. 18), of his revelation, of his historically manifested glory. When we hear his name, we remember all that he has done. The name is the focus, in which all the rays from his actions meet. In my commentary on Ps. xx. 1, under the clause "The name of the God of Jacob exalt thee," it was ob-

1 Dionysius of Alexandria says of the persecution under Valerian, in Eusebius VII. 10: "It was in like manner revealed to John: 'And there was given to him,' he says, 'a mouth speaking great things and blasphemy, and power was given to him forty and two months.' Both were wonderfully verified in Valerian." The persecution of that time occupied the second half of his reign, which lasted about seven years. The emperor was stirred up to persecute the Christians by a certain teacher and principal person among the Magi from Egypt—a master in "abominable enchantments;" so that in him also was fulfilled what is afterwards (ver. 12—18) said of the second beast.

2 Instead of βλασφημίαν several copies have βλασφημίας, from ver. 5, as there some have βλασφημίαν from this verse.

served, "The name of the God of Jacob, is as much as, God who has manifested himself as the God of Jacob, or Jacob's God, who by a fulness of deeds has manifested himself to be such. God is not merely the God of Jacob, but he is also *named* thus; he has made himself known in this character, and has gotten to himself a name, that is glorious and terrible—Deut. xxviii. 58. His election is not a hidden, but a revealed one, confirmed by deeds. Without such deeds the God of Jacob would be nameless; his name would be a shell without a kernel." See besides on Ps. xxii. 31, xxiii. 3, lxxiv. 10, lxxxiii. 16. The main element in the name of God is his revelation in Christ, and the most fearful blasphemy of his name is committed, when this most glorious revelation is consigned to the region of lies and sin—see Heb. i. 1. Hence, we may understand, why the blasphemy of Christ is not mentioned along with the blasphemy of God. It is comprehended in the blasphemy of the name of God, and forms the kernel of it. Moreover, blasphemy is committed against the name of God, when attacks are made on the holy Scriptures, which are the original record of the acts and words of God, of which his name is composed.—On the temple of God as a designation of the church, see vol. i., p. 395. Here the temple bears the name of the *tabernacle*, or the tent, because this was its original form; and it is the more suitable in this place, as at the period of the persecution here referred to the church was again in the wilderness (comp. ch. xii. 6, 14), to which this original form of the sanctuary belonged. That the tabernacle of God is here used as a designation of his church, admits of no doubt, from the connection in which it stands with those, who dwell in heaven, saints and believers, corresponding to the connection between the temple and those who worship in it, in ch. xi. 1. The *name* of God and his *tabernacle* hang very closely together. Without the name no tabernacle, and where the name is, there must also the tabernacle be. The church assembles, not about a concealed, but only about a manifested God—about the God, who has gotten to himself a glorious name (Isa. lxiv. 14), which first reached its perfection in Christ; and in this especially she must find a point of union.—On the dwelling of all believers in heaven, see at ch. xii. 12; Phil. iii. 20; Heb. xii. 22; Rev. xxi. 2, 10, iii. 12, according to which, till the introduction of the new world, Jerusalem, the

holy city, the mother of all believers (Gal. iv. 26), who even in this vale of tears have their citizenship there, is in heaven. Those who are spoken of here as dwelling in heaven, are identical with the saints in ver. 7, 10; here we have blasphemies, in ver. 7, active persecutions. That believers on earth are not excluded, that, on the contrary, they are principally meant, is evident alone from the circumstance, that it is this section of the saints which forms the chief object of the blasphemies of the beast and his adherents; it is these, who are calumniated as evil-doers, and their good behaviour in Christ reproached—comp. 1 Pet. ii. 12, iii. 16.—Blasphemy against God is the genus; the different species are the blaspheming of his *name*, which is converted into an empty one, a *nomen vanum*, by transmuting history into poetry and lies—the blaspheming of *his tabernacle*, which is bereft of a present God (comp. Ex. xxv. 8; Matt. xxviii. 20), and changed into a wretched building of man, unworthy any more of bearing the name of the *tabernacle of meeting*, where "God and angels meet with man"—finally, the blaspheming of those *who dwell in heaven*, denying that they possess his Spirit, and changing them from saints into evil-doers, thus blaspheming God himself, who dwells in them through his Spirit. These three kinds of blasphemy against God always go hand in hand, and are never found apart. They have now again become rampant, since the beast of Daniel in the little horn has once more come upon the stage, and Gog and Magog have taken the place of the beast in the Apocalypse.

Ver. 7. *And it was given him to make war and to overcome them.*[1] *And power was given him over every tribe and people,*[2] *and tongue and nation.* In ch. xi. 7 it is said, "And when they have finished their testimony, the beast, which ascends out

1 The words καὶ ἐδόθη—αὐτούς are wanting in important MSS., and are omitted by Lachmann. But they cannot be dispensed with—since, otherwise, only the first proposition of ver. 5 would be developed, and either both must have a fuller development, or neither of them. The words also are confirmed by a comparison of ch. xi. 7, an anticipatory passage, which required to be resumed here and set in its proper place; and by Daniel, ch. vii. 21. Bengel: "The words here do not so exactly coincide with those in Dan. vii. 21, that we should suppose them to have been borrowed thence." The omission can only have arisen from copyists gliding over one καὶ ἐδόθη to the other.

2 The word *people* is omitted by Luther (also in the English version), and thus the number four is lost, which, in all the parallel passages, is preserved in enumerations.

of the abyss, shall make war with them and overcome them." To this anticipatory passage a literal allusion is intentionally made in the verse before us. Hitherto it has possessed the character of a riddle, but here the riddle is explained. There the object of the conflict and the victory was the testimony, here it is believers generally. The fundamental passage is Dan. vii. 21, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints and overcame them." The reference to this fundamental passage is full of consolation; for there immediately follows in ver. 22, "Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints should possess the kingdom." What is said in Daniel primarily of the little horn is here applied to the beast, though that little horn corresponds with the Gog and Magog of Revelation. And so also what is said here of the beast, of his conflict with the church of Christ and his victory over it, holds good respecting Gog and Magog. Hence we may account for the extreme brevity of the description given us of Gog and Magog. What is merely indicated there, is to be extended and filled up from the delineation of the beast, whose activity, interrupted for a thousand years, is again resumed by Gog and Magog. Whenever this is duly attended to, the description of the beast acquires an entirely new meaning. It then no longer relates simply to things past, but has respect also to the conflicts which we ourselves have to maintain, and fills us with an apprehension of the desperate character which these conflicts may be expected increasingly to assume, as well as inspires us with courage to stand fast in the midst of them. The *power* consists in this, that all must either worship or suffer persecution; that the tribes and nations of the world have no choice left them between worship and death. By confining what is said here merely to the worshippers of the beast, the connection is lost with what precedes; and by confining it merely to Christians (Ewald), the connection with ver. 8 is lost. In regard to the four number of the tribes, &c., see on ch. v. 9, vii. 9, x. 11, xi. 9; also xiv. 6, xvii. 15.

Ver. 8. *And all that dwell upon the earth*[1] *shall worship*

1 The κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς is a standing formula in the Apoc—see ch. iii. 10, viii. 13, xi. 10, xiii. 14, xvii. 8 An argument might be drawn from this peculiarity of expression in support of the view, that John is not the author of the book. But this

him, whose name is not written in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain, from the foundation of the world. Shall worship *him* (not it)—the king, according to ch. xvii. 10, by whom the beast was then represented, the Roman emperor. The *shall worship* shews that the matter was viewed as still in the act of becoming, and that the prophet saw the end only in the beginning.[1] "The worship," Bengel remarks, "is not to be regarded as a purely external homage, but consists principally in an inward veneration, holding the power of the beast to be divine, by which the light of faith in Jesus Christ comes to be greatly obscured, or altogether extinguished." He observes also upon the clause "whose name is not written," &c., as follows: "The trial shall be so general and so severe, that both here and in ch. xvii. 8, their election is set over against it as a security (comp. Matt. xxiv. 24.) The elect alone shall be preserved. The human race will then be divided into two very unequal masses. The smaller will remain on the side of the Lamb; the far larger will worship the adversary." With respect to the book of life, see on ch. iii. 5. Here this book is more exactly defined, as belonging to the Lamb that was slain. (In ch. xxi. 27, simply "the Lamb's book of life" is named.) The ground of our salvation is not our good deeds, but Christ, or more precisely the sacrifice of Christ, the atonement made by his blood (comp. ch. xii. 11, v. 9); whence it is, that Christ appears here under the designation of the Lamb that was slain. Whatever name is not written by *him* in the book of life, that name shall never be found there. Since the book of life is unreservedly ascribed to the Lamb that was slain, all salvation, not excepting that of the saints of the Old Testament, is thus represented as depending on the one sacrifice of Christ. Those who have been reconciled through the blood of this Lamb, and have their names written in his book of life, have power to overcome Satan and the beast (comp. ch. xii. 11.) But

very peculiarity teaches us to be cautious in drawing such conclusions. For the expression is manifestly but a particular result of the dependence exercised in the Apoc. on the Old Testament—comp. Jer. x. 18; Ps. xxxiii. 8; Isa. xviii. 13. That it is an Old Testament form of expression, is rendered plainer by ch. xiv. 6, where for κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς we have καθημένοι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. יָשַׁב has the meaning both of *dwelling* and *sitting*.

1 To the future here, προσκυνήσουσι, corresponds in ch. xvii. the future θαυμάσονται, for which we have ἐθαύμασεν in ver. 3 of this chapter.

if salvation has been won for believers by blood and death, they are thereby made to understand, that through blood and death also they must gain the victory—see Rom. viii. 17, 36, and Rev. ii. 10, xii. 11.—That the expression, "from the foundation of the world," must not be referred to the slaying of the Lamb—as was often done before the time of Bengel—but to the writing of the name in the Lamb's book of life, appears from the parallel passage, ch. xvii. 8.[1] Instead of, "from the foundation of the world," it might have stood, "from before the foundation of the world," as in John xvii. 24; Eph. i. 4; comp. iii. 11. But we should not on this account, either here or in Matt. xxv. 34, have naturally expected *before*, in place of *from*. The Seer here desires to carry the matter no higher than the foundation of the world; he wishes merely to express the thought, that *election precedes existence*, which must necessarily be subsequent to the foundation of the world. The words declare the fixed and immoveable nature of the divine counsel, which was formed even before a single individual of the persons embraced in it had come into being. A reference to such a counsel so fixed and determinate is full of consolation for those, who are oppressed by the mighty and apparently irresistible power of this world, for the purpose of constraining them to worship the beast. Here there is a rock, on which its waves must break. Wherever temptation reaches its greatest height, there nothing preserves but the eternal election, which rests as to its foundation on the atonement of Christ. The world constantly does homage to what, in point of fact, holds possession of the power. We have been taught this by our recent experience. But this eternal election secures us of a safe protection. It is impossible, as our Lord testified (Matt. xxiv. 24), to deceive the elect to their ruin. We have a parallel to the words before us in ch. xi. 1, where, notwithstanding the pressure of the power of the world, the temple and those who worship in it are described as being preserved. The true members of the church are simply those, who by virtue

1 Bengel besides presses the following considerations: "The Apocalypse often speaks of the Lamb slain; it never adds from the foundation of the world; nor, in truth, was he slain from the foundation of the world, Hebr. ix. 26; they who hold him to have been slain in the divine decree from the foundation of the world, may with equal justice speak of him as having been also born, raised from the dead, ascended to heaven."

of Christ's blood, which they have appropriated by a living faith, have come to be among the elect. Such may, indeed, be outwardly overcome and even killed by the beast, but they can never be drawn by him into apostacy.

Ver. 9. *If any one has an ear, let him hear.* Ver. 10. *He that leads into captivity, shall go into captivity; he that kills with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.* According to ver. 9 there is a double point to be attended to. What is to be heard follows in ver. 10. In the epistles the call, "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" (the latter part of the clause is also to be supplied here), is addressed in respect to the mysterious promises given to the churches, which required to be explained and understood in a spiritual manner (see on ch. ii. 7.) Here also the words intimate that the consolatory truth which follows, is a very *hard* one, and is above the discernment of the natural heart. The heart in a state of nature always cleaves to the *visible*, and the truth, "There is a reward for the righteous, there is a God who judges in the earth," must be hard for it. The words here (which purposely, for the sake of avoiding what might seem a standing formula, present a slight deviation from those employed in the epistles—there "He that hath," here "If any one has"), call aloud to all, that they should endeavour to make their escape from this natural condition into the region of the Spirit, so that they may come to enjoy the divine consolation, as it is presented in what follows. Many, who have had an ear, lose it when the temptation rises to its highest pitch (Luke xxiv. 25.) To unfold the divine consolations to such, is to preach to deaf ears. Besides, the consolation, which the ear is here called to hear, is only a preliminary one—a sharply pointed utterance, in which all is concentrated, that afterwards is set forth at large for desponding hearts, and in the strength of which they might be enabled to look the formidable beast in the face, till further help should arrive. The prophet, or rather the Lord, in whose name he speaks, cannot, in a manner, find it in his heart to leave believers so long altogether without consolation, till the description of the first beast's ferocities could be placed beside those of the second. It was necessary, that he should even now address to them a powerful word of encouragement.—The meaning of

ver. 10 was given quite correctly by Vitringa, as intimating that the persecutors of the church should experience the vengeance of God, and should suffer the same evils which they had inflicted on the saints. There are parallels, for example, in Deut. xxxii. 43, "He will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries;" and Ps. xciv. 12, 13, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy law, that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked." According to Bengel, the recompense spoken of is "that which awaits those, who defend themselves against the beast otherwise than is agreeable to the intention of God." But in the carrying away of prisoners and killing with the sword, all naturally think, not of the conquered, but of him to whom it was given, according to ver. 7, to make war on the saints, and to overcome them. The analogy of the use made in the epistles of the formula, "He that hath ears," etc., also seems to indicate, that it is a promise, and not a warning, which we have in the words before us.—St John himself belonged to the number of the captives, being in the isle of Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. In the original it is properly prisoners of *war* that are meant.[1] But this arises merely from the same figure being continued that was used in ver. 7, where the persecution appears as a war, which the beast makes on the saints. If we leave out of view what belongs to the figure of war, we shall find simply marked the deportations which first appeared in the persecution under Domitian (see Introduction.) As an example of those killed with the sword, we find Antipas mentioned in ch. vi. 9, 11, where it is pre-supposed as a fact, that many had even then suffered death for the testi-

1 The phrase *συνάγειν αἰχμαλωσίαν* occurs also in 1 Macc. xiv. 7: *καὶ συνήγαγεν αἰχμαλωσίαν πολλήν*. It corresponds to the Hebrew שבה שבי and הגלה גלות, and denotes the bringing together of captives (Luke xxi. 24), for the purpose of transporting them from their own to a foreign land. The reading adopted by Tischendorf from the Cod. Alex.: *εἴ τις εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει*, which introduces a harsh ellipsis into the text, originated in an ignorance of the Hebrew idiom, which is so appropriate to this book, and was certainly not introduced by any copyist, and which also goes hand in hand with the representation of the persecution under the image of war. For this was derived from the Old Testament relations, according to which the Lord's people formed a separate nation. The Hebraism was the more readily missed here, as *αἰχμαλωσία* (which is used of prisoners of war in Numb. xxxi. 12; Amos i. 6; Eph. iv. 8), occurs presently afterwards in its usual Greek meaning of captivity.

mony of Jesus, and also implied that many more had still to suffer. From such passages as ch. xii. 16, "And the earth helped the woman;" xvii. 16, "And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire;" xviii. 6,—we see that under the expression, he shall be killed with the sword, we are not merely to think of God's avenging sword. "He who sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," this declaration—which lies at the foundation of what is written here—must be fully realised. As in the original passage, and in Matth. xxvi. 52, we have before us here, not a *command*, but a prophecy—not the rule by which the civil power was to proceed, but that by which God was to work. The two, however, are not so different from each other as they may seem to be. The rule of God's procedure is, at the same time, the rule by which the magistrate should regulate his doings, as certainly as he is the servant of God for the punishment of evil doers. Those who would withhold from the magistrate the right of capital punishment are always the persons who have no living sense of the punitive righteousness of God. The declaration of our text has often been fulfilled in particular cases; we need only think of Domitian, Valerian, Julian.[1] But these were only preludes of the more comprehensive fulfilments it was to receive in persecuting Rome and the other persecuting monarchies that have trod in her footsteps, and are still treading (see on Gog and Magog the ungodly power of the last times, ch xx. 9.)—That we must explain, "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints," here they are in their right place, and they have here their proper work (not: in this word respecting a coming retribution they have their root), appears by comparing ver. 18, ch. xiv. 12, xvii. 9. Patience and faith are here in their place; whatever individual, whatever church possesses them, if they but shine forth in the lustre of these graces, it will be seen how soon the wicked go to destruction, coming to a dreadful end, and how the righteous, on

1 Bossuet: "St John, distressed by the long sufferings of the saints, with which all the chapters of his book are occupied, enters into their sorrow, and consoles them with this declaration. It has been verified to the letter, even in the case of the emperors. Valerian, who had dragged so many of the faithful to prison, was himself dragged thither by the king of Persia, and reduced to a harder servitude than what he had imposed on others; his blood was shed, as he had shed that of saints," etc.

the other hand, flourish like the palm-trees, and grow like the cedars in Lebanon. *Patience* is that which prevents men from becoming faint and languid, as those who are spoken of in Matth. xiii. 21—see on ch. ii. 3. The sort of patience is *faith*, which keeps its eye on God's sword of vengeance, hanging over the adversaries, and descries his avenging hand in the clouds. The prophet comes to the help of this faith and patience in what follows—as he there presents in the liveliest colours possible the divine retribution, clothes it, as it were, with flesh and blood, so that they may successfully maintain the conflict with what outwardly appears of an adverse nature.

THE THIRD ENEMY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD—THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH, CH. XIII. 11—18.

The prophet sees a second beast ascend out of the *earth*, earthly and demoniacal wisdom. Its horns being like lamb's horns indicated that in the secret, spiritual manner in which it should seek to operate on men's minds, it was to resemble Christ; while its speech, being like that of the dragon, implied that it was to have, in common with the first beast, an ungodly nature, hatred to Christ and his church. It was to give itself to the service of this first beast, and in it the power of that beast was to find its chief support. Its whole energy is directed to the one point, of inducing the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first beast. Its origin, form, and nature are described in ver. 11, and its activity in the one grand direction in ver. 12. In the interest of its master it does great wonders, and employs the authority it thus acquires to the purpose of seducing the inhabitants of the earth to make an idol of the first beast, which by its art it inspires, as it were, with life, and accomplishes, that as many as refused to worship this idol should be put to death, ver. 13—15. It brings the whole world to the alternative of either receiving a *mark* of the first beast, his name or the number of his name; or, in the event of their refusing it, having withdrawn from them the means of life, ver. 16, 17. In ver. 18 the number of the beast is given, and consequently also his name.

Bengel says, "The beast out of the sea is by much the more

distinguished of the two. The beast out of the earth comes with all that he is and can do merely as the herald of the other—his armour-bearer, his advocate. Not this latter, but the first beast is the one that is worshipped, has the ten horns, &c. Mention is often made of the first beast alone, but never of the other without the first. The whole being and object of the second are summed up in its doing to the first the part of a false prophet."

This enemy, too, has a long past history: from the first it has been the attendant and helper of the second enemy of God's kingdom. *The God-opposing power of this world has constantly gone hand in hand with its wisdom.* Pharaoh, when contending with the Lord and his people, was surrounded by his wise men;—see Ex. vii. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 8. In like manner we find the king of Babylon attended by his wise men, Dan. i. 20, ii. 2, ss., v. 7, 8; and they had their place around him as the props of the state, and its guardians against misfortune (Is. xlvii.) However, in this case no survey is taken of the past, as in regard to the first and second beast. The influence of this enemy is only represented from the period, when the war of the first beast against the kingdom of God after the healing of its deadly wound burst forth anew.

If it is certain, that the first beast revives again in Gog and Magog, we must not regard its inseparable attendant, the second beast, as for ever buried, but must consider every word that is said of it as of practical moment also for us. Wherever the ungodly state again flourishes, there also the ungodly wisdom is sure to be in attendance, to strengthen its hands and deck out its pretensions.

Ver. 11. *And I saw another beast arise out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb's horns, and spake like a dragon.* That this other beast denotes false ungodly teaching is clear alone from the designation of the false prophet, under which he appears elsewhere—comp. xvi. 13, xix. 20, xx. 10. The more exact destination we learn from the circumstance of this second beast coming to the help of the first, *when the latter undertook the war against Christ.* On this ground we conclude, it can only be the antichristian heathen wisdom. We formerly adduced proof (vol. i. p. 27), to shew that even at the time the Apocalypse was written under Domitian, the claims made by the Ro-

man empire in opposition to Christ found support in a false worldly wisdom. This enemy appears only *here* under the name of a beast, which is to be explained from the circumstance, that the name had become peculiarly appropriated, through the prophecies of Daniel, to the power of the world as opposed to the interest of God. It is of importance here only as indicating, that the false wisdom of the world has the same source of life as its power. The name of beast was very humbling and vexatious for such persons as thought they had almost raised themselves by their aërial speculations above the common lot of humanity. To the name of *beast* here corresponds, in Jas. iii. 15, the description of human wisdom as *sensual* (ψυχικὴ); of the soul, the soul being common to man with the beasts. The Gnostics, who actually were the wisdom of the heathen world under a Christian dress, have the same epithet applied to them in Jude v. 19, as having merely animal life, but no spirit, corresponding to the designation of "brute beasts" in ver. 10. We point also for elucidation to 1 Cor. ii. 12—14, where "man's wisdom" in like manner appears confined to the lower region of the soul, to which is opposed the region of God's Spirit.—The beast arises *out of the earth.* This origin of the second beast corresponds to its designation as a *beast.* The original passage is Dan. vii. 17. The four beasts, which had arisen out of the sea, are there said to be four kings, who should arise *out of the earth,* in contrast to the kingdom, which the God of heaven should set up—ii. 44. In John viii. 23, the expression, "who is from above," stands in opposition to those who are from beneath; and the same contrast is presently after marked by being of this world and not being of it. In John iii. 3, our Lord speaks in opposition to a purely *earthly* origin, of being born *from above.* This being born from above is afterwards explained by being "born of the Spirit" (ver. 8.) The want of spirit, and, corresponding to it, the purely animal, brute nature, is the characteristic mark of that wisdom which comes, not from above, but out of the earth. The earth, out of which the prophet sees the beast ascending, stands in opposition to the heaven (comp. "the wisdom which is *from above.*") But what thus belongs *only* to the earth, has its origin also in hell, between which and the earth there exists a free communication —comp. ch. ix. 1, where through the medium of the opened well-

pit the evil spirit ascends from hell to the earth. In things pertaining to the spirit earth has no productions of its own. Either heaven or hell, God or the devil, are always standing in the background. According to ch. xvi. 13, the spirits of devils proceed out of the mouth of the false prophet. That the earthly origin, too, when more profoundly considered, is a hellish one, may be inferred from the beast ascending through the medium of the earth out of hell, or, at least, receiving thence his inspiration. The name of the false prophet itself also points in the same direction. The essential element in prophesying is, the inspiration. Revelation and prophecy are inseparably connected together. The false prophet can only be one who, instead of the Divine, has a Satanic inspiration. A prophet, who is destitute of the higher Spirit, must be full of the spirit from the abyss. Of the three predicates, therefore, which in Jas. iii. 15 are applied to the wisdom of this world—earthly, sensual, devilish—the first and second correspond to the rising out of the earth here; while the middle one corresponds to the designation of the false prophet by the name of *beast*.—In regard to the *form* of the beast, here only its horns are taken notice of. It is, therefore, of no use to throw out conjectures regarding the other parts. The figure of the wolf suggested by Vitringa would scarcely suit. The false prophets in Matth. vii. 15 are only in respect to their *internal* disposition "ravening wolves."—Of the horns it is not said, that they were like *the*, but *a* lamb, for: the horns of a lamb—a lamb in so far as he has horns. But since they are like lamb's horns, they are also like to the horns of the lamb. Horns are a symbol of power (see on v. 6.) The Lamb in the passage referred to is represented as having *seven* horns. The horns being seven in number indicates that power belonged to it in a very high degree. Here the horns are only two, showing that its fulness of power is far below that of the Lamb. But a resemblance exists in the *shape* of the horns. These are in both cases so small and imperceptible, that one would think, nothing could be accomplished by them. The wisdom of this world has so much in common with Christ, that its power is a *concealed* one; its manner of working is invisible, at least not palpable. The more spiritual, however, the power is, it is so much the more efficient. We must not understand the horns being like lamb's horns, of gentleness, goodness, meekness

(as Bengel thinks),—for according to what follows, such qualities had no place here; but it must denote something which really belongs to the beast, not what it has merely in appearance. In the case of the Lamb also, it is not meekness that is denoted by the horns. The expression: like a dragon, is of much the same meaning with, like the dragon. For, how a dragon would speak —if it could speak—this we can only learn from what the dragon actually speaks. In the preceding verses no speech of the dragon is expressly recorded. But we can be in no doubt respecting its nature. For, the whole being of the dragon concentrates itself in hatred against Christ and his church, in panting after bloody persecutions. *Ecrasez l'Infame*—this is its watchword, and that also of the second beast. De Wette, when remarking "like a dragon, namely cunning, deceitful, comp. Gen. iii. 1," substitutes the serpent for the dragon. Satan bears the name of dragon only as the prince of this world, who plies every effort to maintain his dominion over it, and to extirpate those who set themselves against him.

Ver. 12. *And he makes all the power of the first beast before him; and makes, that the earth and those who dwell on it should worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.* Bengel remarks, "The other beast urges the worship of the first; and the first, whose power the other has entirely at command, has only, as it were, to look on, and allow himself to be worshipped. The earth and they who dwell on it are brought to this by the other beast." The prophet had already spoken of the *power* of the beast, in ver. 2, 4, 5, 7. Of these passages respect is here had more especially to the *last;* "And power was given him over all tribes and peoples, and tongues and nations." The wisdom of this world is the main support of this power. The state of heathendom would soon have sunk into utter ruin, if this had not lent its aid. Brute force is always impotent. That only which has an ally in public sentiment, can have a lasting existence. And it was to secure that, that the false wisdom put forth its energies. The lamb's horns of science are more powerful than the bullock's horns of the state. Neander in his Church History (vol. i. p. 213), remarks in unintentional coincidence with this verse: "Intellectual weapons united with external violence to attack the new principle, which had begun

to manifest itself in the life of mankind." Bengel also remarks, "What the first beast has power to do, this other does in his name, since the first can no longer take the business directly in hand—although his power in itself still continues." He improperly substitutes for the power itself that, which the first beast has power to do. The expression, *before him*, implies that he acts as his servant, works in his interest. Following Vitringa, Züllig erroneously explains: "Before his eyes, not only as his servant, who as such should stand before him, but also as his servant of hearty good-will, who delights to be seen acting for him." In the Old Testament phraseology, to stand before any one, simply means to serve him, without the collateral idea of good-will in the service. It is enough to compare Ex. xxiv. 13, "Joshua his servant," with Deut. i. 38, "Joshua who stands before him;" then Numb. iii. 6, "Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him," 1 Kings x. 8, "These thy servants who stand continually before thee," (LXX. ἐνωπιόν σου), Dan. i. 5. In Rev. xix. 20, the *before him* is explained by the preceding *with him*. The second *makes* resumes the former:[1] It makes, or exercises the power of the first beast, as it brings the inhabitants of the earth to the length of worshipping the first beast, and thus to recognize his power, and submit themselves to him. That the earth is named beside and before its inhabitants, was probably done with a view to the contrast with the heaven and them that dwell therein, in ver. 6, and in reference to the ascending of the beast out of the earth, in ver. 11. In this connection the earth and those that dwell in it would not be absolutely all who have their local habitation on the earth, but only the earthly-minded portion of its inhabitants (Phil. iii. 19.) The words, "whose deadly wound was healed," cannot possibly have been given as a mere note of distinction; the simple epithet of "the first beast" would have been quite sufficient for that. They are rather intended to point to what the second beast urged as the ground of his solicitation, that men should worship the first. He appeals to the new life that was manifested by the first beast, the great success of his persecutions, and the helpless and prostrate condi-

1 On this account alone the reading, καὶ ἐποίει instead of ποιεῖ cannot be the correct one.

tion of the church (see on ver. 3, and also on ver. 14.) Besides, the healing can be no perfect and thorough one, in the feeling of the beast himself, and of those who serve him. The strenuous exertions made to help his cause, bear evidence to this. The old naive confidence is gone. The efforts of a worldly philosophy to prop up and maintain the worship of idols, also come under the class of things here referred to. For this was only another form of the service which was yielded to the dominant worldly power. The Roman state was honoured in the idol-gods which it had set up. At the time when Christianity appeared, faith in these gods had already been much shaken. "Pious sentiment," says Tzschirner, on the Fall of Heathenism, p. 118, "had vanished from the soul, no longer did any faith in the avenging and protecting gods dwell in the depths of the heart. Polytheism had become a mythology without doctrine, a bodily service without devotional feeling, a lifeless form, a mere shell." Neander also says, in reference to the letter of Pliny, "He requires, inasmuch as he looks upon religion as a matter of state, unconditional obedience even here to the laws of the empire. With the character of the religion he has nothing to do. Whatever that might be, defiance of the imperial laws must be severely punished" (History, vol. i., p. 134.) And again, at p. 136, "He was of opinion, that open contempt of the 'Roman ceremonies,' open resistance to the laws of the empire, could not be suffered in any case to go unpunished, even though no act was connected with it of a *morally* punishable nature." Bengel says in his closing prayer, "What the Spirit of truth has done in thy servants, the same is done in the contrary direction by the false prophet in the men of the world. Imprint the truth of thy testimony deeply upon our hearts, that we may hold it fast against all temptations."

Ver. 13. *And he does great wonders, so that*[1] *he even makes fire come down from heaven before men.* Ver. 14. *And deceives them that dwell on the earth, because of the signs which are given him to do before the beast, saying to those who dwell upon the earth, that they should make an image of the beast*

1 Bengel: "ἵνα, a particle much used by John. In all his writings, he has never but once, Gos. iii. 16, employed ὥστε, and there a ἵνα immediately follows." An important observation! This predilection for the ἵνα is of great moment in regard to the question of the authorship of John's writings.

which had the wound of the sword, and became alive. Ver. 15. *And it was given to him to give spirit to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should even speak; and that he should make, that whosoever would not worship the image of the beast, should be killed.*—This third *does* or makes at the beginning of ver. 13, points back to the first. The great wonders which the second beast works, are the means by which he establishes the power of the first. The fundamental passage is Matt. xxiv. 24, "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall do great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Here, as there, the same word is used to denote the means of seduction; it was to be through the working of great wonders. Our verse comes the nearer to the fundamental passage, when it is considered that it would be an arbitrary limitation of the first, if we should understand by the false prophets only wolves in sheep's clothing; as also if by the false Christs should be understood, not solely, nor even pre-eminently, the poor subjects who gave themselves out for the Jewish Messias or Christ; but we should much rather understand those, who in palpable opposition to Christ, lay claim to what belongs only to him. The passage 2 Thess. ii. 9 is also to be compared. It is said there of the adversary, whose first great manifestation was the raising up of heathen Rome against Christ: "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." No indication is given in any of the three passages, that the great wonders, when more closely examined, should prove only cheats and delusions. For, that the *lying wonders* in 2 Thess. are not false wonders in the ordinary sense, needs no proof. The reality of the wonders in the several passages is neither denied nor admitted. It appears unadvisable to go more closely into the examination of the material composition of these signs and wonders. It was possible that they might rise above the sphere of mere semblance and deceit; there might be much going along with them, that would bring them to the very borders of the miraculous, that, by means of demoniacal excitement, would make what was done exceed the ordinary powers of nature. Scripture has a more efficacious way of dealing with the matter than criticism. It lets the wonders, by which the world suffers

itself to be deceived, be what they give themselves out for, and what they are reckoned, and yet laughs in their face. It took this course even in respect to the wise men of Egypt (see my work Egypt and the Books of Moses, p. 79, sq.) And it is the course prescribed in Deut. xiii. 1—3, "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake to thee, saying, Let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken to the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." Soothsaying and witchcraft also are rejected in Scripture, not on the ground of their nothingness, but because they are an abomination to the Lord, Deut. xviii. 9, sq. Though the signs should here and there rise above what is common, they still remain widely different from true wonders through their aim, the merely natural character of which they never can get rid of, and by their mixture with common frauds. Besides, as the signs of the Egyptian wise men were occasioned by those of Moses, so are the signs of the false prophet here occasioned by those of Christ. He would undo the powerful impression which these had made upon the minds of men.[1] Then, as times change, so in the room of the old material signs come, in the progress of civilization, the pretended wonders of the intellect. Beside the general expression, *great wonders*, there is also mentioned by way of individualizing that wonder, which from John's peculiar temperament was especially fitted to strike him. *Fire from heaven* was what he and James would have brought down upon those, who would not receive Christ (Luke ix. 51.) Fire from heaven also, according to ch. xx. 9, falls upon the last enemies of God's kingdom, and consumes them (comp. ch. xi. 5.)—The ex-

[1] It is unnecessary to adduce any historical quotation to show, that in the conflict of heathenism with Christianity, wonders and signs played an important part. Every church history supplies the proof. Bossuet remarks, "All the writings of Jamblicus, all those of Porphyry and the others, so much esteemed by Julian, are full of those delusive *prestiges*, which the people generally take for miracles; and the weakness of Julian outrun that of others, Amm. Marc. XXII., XXIII., XXV. We find also a vast number of the prodigies of those philosophers of Julian, even to resurrections from the dead, reported by Ennapius. Julian himself declared his belief in those arts, which he called holy; that is to say, in magic, ap. Cyrillum, L. VI., c. Jul., p. 198."

pression, *before men*, here, corresponds to, before him, in ver. 12. The second beast forms, as it were, the agent between the first beast and men.[1]—In ver. 14, is given the aim, which the great wonders serve. The *inhabitants of the earth*[2] are mentioned so frequently, in order to bring distinctly into view the critical position of the little flock, who have against them a whole deceived world, the huge mass of worldly-minded persons on the earth (comp. on ver. 12.) The greatness of the danger has also occasioned the copious, repetitionary description of our section. Since the history of the deluge Scripture has employed the method, in describing great catastrophes, conflicts, dangers, critical moments, of using frequent repetitions, which tend to bring the scene more vividly before the eye of the reader. Such, for example, is the narrative of the image of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. iii.; and the account of Haman's elevation, pride, and cruel plot against the Jews, in Esth. iii. That a description of this kind, so full of repetitions, should be employed in what is said of the second beast, more than in the case of the first, corresponds to the declaration in ver. 12, that all the power of the first beast is exercised through the second, and rests upon the discernment, of the heathenish and demoniacal intelligence being a still more frightful enemy than the coercive power of heathendom. The effort is everywhere apparent, to render manifest the danger and the tribulation in their real depth and magnitude. Scripture looks the reality full in the face, because it has even for the greatest sufferings and dangers the strongest consolation. The world, on the other hand, deceives itself regarding the danger, and would have all in that respect diminished, because it sees no alternative but despair, whenever it opens its eyes on the entire magnitude of the danger.—It is not *images* that are spoken of, but an image. But in regard to the sense a multitude of images are meant. The oneness of the image belongs only to the vision, in which the manifold nature of the reality is compressed into *one* great drama. It was very natural also to speak only of one image, on account of the example already given in Daniel, to which allusion is not

1 This ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων also shews, that the former ἐνώπιον must simply mean *before*. So also the ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου in ver. 14.

2 In ver. 12, the earth and those that dwell *in it*, after the Hebrew, comp. for example Ps. xxiv. 1; here it is more after the Greek style, those who dwell *upon* the earth.

doubtfully made here. The king of Babylon there collects all his officials from every province, and commands them to worship the image set up by him. The image there is the image of a god. But this difference is not essential. The worship was required for the god, not on account of his own nature, but merely because he was the god of Nebuchadnezzar. Disobedience was punished as high treason. Nebuchadnezzar reproaches the persons accused in ver. 14 and 15, with having refused to worship *his* god and the image, which *he* had caused to be made (see my Beitr. I., p. 83, ss.) The setting up of the likeness of the emperor was one of the most effectual means, which heathen despotism could employ, to place itself in the centre of the world. By means of this image the beast was rendered in a manner omnipresent. Its *living* representative, the Roman emperor, was confined to no particular place. In this way the choice was set before Christians between martyrdom, for the true confession, and apostacy.—In the beast's return to life again lies the reason, for which an image behoved to be made for him. Persecution appeared to proceed with every mark of success. The beast seemed to make a sport of Him, who had alleged, that all power was given to him in heaven and on earth, and who had said that the very hairs of his people were numbered. Ground enough in this for preparing an image for the beast, and holding it up as an object of adoration to the whole world, with which also we have to think of the *cursing* of his apparently impotent rival as immediately connected.[1]—The *Spirit*, which, according to ver. 15, belongs to the image of the beast, is not one properly residing in him, but flowing out of him, along with the *speech* given to him by the wisdom of this world. It can only, therefore, be an *apparent* life that is spoken of. The spirit is first given to the image of the beast in this way, that men's minds are filled with exalted representations of the beast himself and of his almighty power, in contrast to the supposed im-

1 Pliny, in L. X. ep. 97, reports, at a time very near to the composition of the Apocalypse: Propositus est libellus sine auctore, multorum nomina continens, qui negant se esse Christianos aut fuisse; cum praeeunte me deos appellarent, et *imagini tuae* (he writes to Trajan), quam propter hoc jusseram cum simulacris numinum afferi, thure ac vino supplicarent: praeterea maledicerent Christo, quorum nihil cogi posse dicuntur, qui sunt revera Christiani, ergo dimittendos putavi. Alii ab indice nominati, esse se Christianos dixerunt: et mox negaverunt, fuisse quidem sed desiise.—Omnes et imaginem tuam Deorumque simulacra venerati sunt; ii et Christo maledixerunt.

potence of his opponent. Admiration of the object naturally passes over to the image. Then, it is also to be taken into account, that according to the heathen manner of viewing things, the apprehension of a very close connection between the image and its object immediately presented itself, whenever the beast was raised into the rank of super-human beings, and invested with divine glory. An idol was no mere image to the heathen mind, which always sought an objective ground for its feelings; it was penetrated by the divinity which it represented, and formed a visible representation of it. The one partook of the life of the other; spoke though without uttering audible words, threatened and promised. How vividly such conceptions were entertained, is evident from the reports so often circulated of voices actually uttered by these images of the gods.[1] On these reported utterances, however, no stress is to be laid here; and they are only so far of importance, as they shew, how deeply rooted was the imagination of a speaking *spiritually* by the images.—The import of the speeches we may learn from ver. 5, 6. The image speaks what the beast does—great and blasphemous things against God and his name and his church, threatenings to his adversaries, who worship the Lamb that was slain, and promises to his own worshippers. It is difficult for us to render properly manifest the tempting nature of such a state of things. Now that time and the judgment of God have brought fully to light the vanity of the objects, which the world reverences and adores, we can scarcely comprehend, how vast a power they must have exercised on the minds of men, and how much they would carry of a temptation even for the chosen people of God. We shall only attain to some real acquaintance with this, if we learn to understand the past by the present—if we bring ourselves distinctly to apprehend the great power of the spirit of the age, so that with a clear eye we can discern the absolute poverty of the idols, to which the world *now* pays homage; and then put it solemnly to our own hearts, whether we find it quite easy to withdraw ourselves from all participation in the homage, to which the wisdom of this world so treacherously invites us, communicating life and spirit

1 Grotius: Imagines loqui res mira, non tamen incredibilis. Habes id in historiis Romanis et valerio maximo, de simulacris Junonis Monetae, Fortunae Muliebris, Silvani.

to things in themselves dead, and to which we are drawn by the almost resistless power of public opinion, which, like a mighty torrent, sweeps everything along with it, that is not firmly rooted in God. The danger in such circumstances is not simply of being killed ; it arises fully as much from one's own inclination to do homage. This discovers itself in the *roughness*, which so often meets us in the martyrs of the first centuries. It was the reaction against the internal temptation into which they were dragged by the force of public opinion. We must not explain : and made; so that the image is the subject; but rather: and that it made ; so that the beast, the false prophet is the subject. Otherwise, instead of: the image of the beast, the pronoun would have been put: and made, that those who did not worship *his* image, should be killed. The insertion of the name instead of the pronoun was here indispensable, as thus alone could the dubiety be shunned. That the second beast is the subject, appears also from the repetition of the words, "and makes," in ver. 16. The being killed and the not buying or selling can have him alone for its author. We have here the commentary on the words: he spake like a dragon, in ver. 11. We may further compare Dan. iii. 6, according to which those, who did not worship the image of Nebuchadnezzar, were to be cast the selfsame hour into the fiery furnace.

Ver. 16. *And he makes all,*[1] *the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that a mark should be given them on their right hand or on their forehead.* Ver. 17.[2] *That no one should be able to buy or sell, but he that has the mark, the name*[3] *of the beast, or the number of his name.* The named are seven; the *all* at the beginning, then the three pairs. We have a similar seven, and divided in a similar way, in ch. vi. 15. The divisions are comprised in the number four, which is always in the Apocalypse the signature of the earth. The enumeration begins with the small, and concludes

1 The expression: he makes all, is as much as: he brings all into such a position, he works upon them to this effect (comp. ver. 12)—a Hebr. use of ποιεῖν; see Gesenius on עשה.

2 The καί, which several good manuscripts have here, so as to make "and that," can scarcely have been original. The ποιεῖ would then have been repeated, as it occurred in ver. 16 in a sense not quite applicable here.

3 Luther follows the false reading, ἢ τὸ ὄνομα, or the name.

with the slaves. From the small a rise is made to the great, and from the rich there is a descent to the poor, from the free to the bond. We often find in the Apocalypse the contrast between the small and the great—see on ch. xi. 18, xix. 5—18, xx. 12. The *mark* is also mentioned in ch. xiv. 9, xvi. 2, xix. 20, xx. 4. It belongs only to the vision, in which every thing must become visible and possess form. Substantially it means confession. This confession, however, naturally drives at public notoriety by some visible mark—as we see in the present times the revolutionary, anti-christian spirit making itself known by the wearing of dark red cocades. The mark, however, is independent of these outward distinctions, although the idea involved in it is by means of them brought out in a lively and striking manner. The figure of the mark is only corporealized by such things.—If the *right* hand had not been expressly named, the hand along with the forehead might have been simply taken for the uncovered parts of the body. But as it is, the hand must be regarded as named in respect to its being the instrument of acting. A person's bearing the mark upon his right hand, is to be explained thus, that in all his actions he is to shew himself a true servant of the beast. The forehead comes into notice as the most open part of the body. Whatever is there is easily seen and is used for display—comp. vii. 3, ix. 4, xiv. 1, xvii. 5, xxii. 4. For any one to bear the mark of the beast on his forehead, is to declare himself before all the world as a servant of the beast. The forehead is the most appropriate place for a confession.—Allusion is made to Deut. vi. 6—8, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a *sign upon thine hand,* and they shall be as *frontlets between thine eyes,*" (comp. the parallel passages, xi. 18, 19; Ex. xiii. 9, 16, and on the sense of the passages, the *figure* of which was embodied in the Jewish phylacteries, my Beitr. II. p. 451, ss.) That one should often think of the true God, of his commandments and his benefits (Ex. xiii. 9), and be always ready to make acknowledgment of them, this is enforced by what is said figuratively in the law concerning the

marking on one's hand, and binding between the eyes. But those blind and deluded victims—horrid thought!—bear upon their hand and forehead the mark of the beast. (The agreement, too, is the greater, as the *μέτωπον* properly means, what is between the eyes.) It is well remarked by Züllig, "John has as little thought here of the Roman custom of marking slaves on the hand and forehead, as generally of referring to heathen matters." He continues to stand at "the rough, almost disdainful contrariety that was manifested to the precept in Deut. vi. 8; Ex. xiii. 9, 10." The aim and result of imprinting the mark is, that no one is able to buy or sell, who has not the mark, ver. 17. He that cannot buy and sell is as one excluded from human society, and deprived of the necessary means of existence. The mark consists either of the name of the beast, or of the number of his name. Hence it follows, that the number of the name must be equally significant with the name itself—that the nature of the beast must thereby be definitely exhibited. This also is plain from ch. xv. 2, where those are spoken of who obtain the victory over the beast, and over the image, and over the number of his name. There the name itself is not specified.

Ver. 18. *Here is wisdom. Let him that has understanding consider the number of the beast; for it is a man's number, and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.* That we must here explain; here wisdom is in its proper place, is plain from what was already said at ver. 10. From that passage, and from ch. xvii. 9, we expect, in what follows, not a child's play with letters, but a problem, which belongs to the region of a more profound spiritual discernment. Wisdom used absolutely, is always that wisdom which comes from above (Jas. iii. 15), which has an ethical foundation, and bears an ethical character. Properly a prerogative of God (vii. 12), and of Christ (v. 12), it comes to be possessed only by those to whom the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory," has given the spirit of wisdom and of revelation (Eph. i. 17; Jas. i. 5; Acts vi. 3; Col. i. 9, also the classical passage upon the heavenly origin of wisdom in the book of Wisdom, vii. 25, 26), and along therewith a deeper insight into divine and human things, and the capacity generally of apprehending the right in knowledge and duty. The passage before us would stand entirely out of the sphere of the New Testament

usage, if by wisdom were here meant something, for which no spiritual discernment is required, and which might be attained even by the most carnal mind. If wisdom generally is required for the elucidation of this book, as certainly as it is the product of the Spirit, it must be quite peculiarly so here. They only have *understanding*, whose understanding Jesus has opened by his Spirit, (Luke xxiv. 45.) The understanding is a mere name, if it has not wisdom—comp. xvii. 9. The understanding is properly the seat of wisdom, being the mental power to which it belongs, where it exists. Still, since this mental power, when devoid of wisdom, might as well not exist, is a shell without a kernel, so he alone has understanding in the more distinctive sense, who has wisdom—comp. Dan. xii. 10, "The wicked shall not understand it, but the understanding shall understand it," where wickedness and understanding stand opposed to each other. In those passages, of which this is one, where wisdom comes into consideration only in a theoretical respect, to have understanding and to have wisdom are one and the same. The history of the exposition of this book has amply justified the appeal to wisdom and understanding.— We are called literally to *count* the number. But as here such a counting is meant, as belongs to the sphere of wisdom and of spiritual discernment, it cannot be a counting in the ordinary sense that is intended. Nor would this afford any proper exposition; for though we should set out from the view, that the number of the beast is that which arises from the summing up of the letters of his name, read as numerals, there should still be no proper reckoning of the number of the beast. (This is clear alone from the circumlocution of Ewald: "let him compute the number of the beast, let him see by computing, what name will be expressed by the sum of the number.") In a looser sense every mental exercise which has to do with numbers, may be drawn into the category of reckoning.—The beast, being named unconditionally, is the *first* beast—not, however, in contrast to the second, which is rather to be regarded as its inseparable attendant. Here the subject of discourse is the number of the beast, and in ver. 17, and in ch. xv. 2, the number of his name. The number of the beast, according to these parallel passages, is primarily, on this account, the number, that it is the *signature of his name*. Whence we obtain the result, that we must not stand

at the point of endeavouring to discover an internal relation between the nature of the beast and his number; that the number also, and above all, must be employed in reference to a name; and that every determination of the number must be false, which does not fulfil this condition.[1] This result is confirmed by the circumstance, that whenever we dissever the number of the beast from his name, the latter remains unknown to us. But it is not to be imagined, that John, after having spoken in ver. 17 of the name of the beast and his number, should here announce only the latter. If John had not wished to note (indirectly) the name of the beast, he would certainly have made no mention of it. On the other hand, however, *the number must have a signification even apart from its reference to the name of the beast.* It must stand in an independent relation to the nature of the beast. For, were this not the case, it could scarcely be understood, why the number should have been spoken of beside the name, why the name should not have been put without circumlocution. Then, there can be no doubt that here of purpose, not the number of the name of the beast, but only the number of the beast, is what is mentioned; and it will not do to take the expression as a mere abbreviation. The result therefore is, *that alone can be the right explanation of the number which, first, supplies a name; and, secondly, indicates a direct relation between the number and the nature of the beast.*—What we are to understand by "the number of a man," is plain from the parallel passage, ch. xxi. 17, where the "measure of a man" is the common measure, that is used among men, and from Isa. viii. 1, where "with a man's pen" means, with the instrument commonly employed by men in writing. Accordingly, the number of a man forms a contrast to a mystical or mysterious number; and the words indicate, that in the solution of the riddle we must seek for no mystery in the

1 Hofmann, in his Weissagung und Erf. I. p. 312, thinks, "that we cannot gather from the words of John, that he himself knew the name, and that the contrary is the more credible, the more extraordinary the import of the number is." But if John did not know the name of the beast, (which would ill accord with his being the organ of the revelation of Jesus Christ, and on this ground alone is incredible, because it must necessarily be a name of nature that is meant, the knowledge of which must be essentially bound up with the knowledge of the nature itself,) how, then, could he speak, not only of the number of the beast, but also of the number of the name of the beast? He, who is ignorant of the name of the beast, cannot possibly know the number which corresponds to this name, and is indicative of it.

number itself. Against the explanation, "for it is the number of the name of a man," a number which is made up of the numerical value of the letters of a name; we oppose, 1. The fact, that the beast is not a man, not an individual; 2. The fundamental and parallel passages. To say nothing of other reasons—for example, that the *for* in that case would be unsuitable. Rightly understood, these words overthrow the hypothesis, which would construct a number out of the numerical value of the letters of a name.—The *for* belongs to both clauses. Were the number not an ordinary, a common one, the call to compute it, or to reflect on it, would be to no purpose; as is clear alone from the endless diversity that prevails among the advocates of the reckoning by letters; and in order to be able to count the number, one must know what the number is.—It admits of no doubt, that John wrote the number 666. The same Irenaeus, who mentions the variation 616, also tells us, that the number 666 was found in all the best and oldest manuscripts; and that those who had seen John, testified to its correctness.[1] And the more importance is to be attached to the latter portion of the statement, that he makes no appeal to such confirmatory testimony, in reference to the *signification* of the number. In the manuscripts are to be found only faint and unimportant traces of the reading 616. On internal grounds, too, the other reading is to be preferred. "The three sixes," says Vitringa, "placed together, have something of an enigmatical appearance, which does not exist to the same degree in 616." Probably the number 616 is not a proper variation, but only the conjecture of some who could not bring the number 666 into accordance with the name, which they had got fixed in their heads. Irenaeus, certainly, is of opinion that the reading 616 was originally a slip of the pen; but, at the same time, he says expressly, that on the number 616 were raised calculations of names, and he himself offers in consequence grounds for an easier explanation. Then, as it is evident from Irenaeus alone, that the number even in the earliest times had awakened much attention, it is scarcely to be imagined that a deviation from the correct reading should have arisen from mere carelessness.

From the preceding remarks, it is obvious, that our business

1 B. V. 30: *ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς σπουδαίοις καὶ ἀρχαίοις ἀντιγράφοις τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τούτου κειμένου καὶ μαρτυρούντων ἐκείνων τῶν κατ' ὄψιν τὸν Ιωάννην ἑωρακότων.*

is *first to discover the name of the beast which furnishes the number* 666. And here we must not wander about after our own imaginations. The Seer of the Apocalypse lives entirely in holy Scripture. On this territory, therefore, is the solution of the sacred riddle to be sought. And there also it can be found with perfect certainty. *In the whole of the Old Testament there is but one instance in which the number* 666 *occurs in connection with a name.* It is said in Ezra ii. 13, "The sons of Adonikam 666." The name Adonikam must therefore be the name of the beast. It was admirably fitted for being so. It means: the Lord arises,[1] and is in excellent agreement with the watch-word of the worshippers of the beast: "Who is like the beast, and who is able to make war with him?" It combines all, that in the preceding description had been said to characterize the beast. It is a name of blasphemy; it corresponds to the mouth speaking great things; it accords admirably with the demand upon all the inhabitants of the earth to worship the beast. It points to the war against the saints, and the carrying away of these into captivity, and killing them with the sword. It also perfectly agrees with the description, which St Paul, in 2 Thess. ii. 4, gives of the man of sin: "Who opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." *The Lord arises*—this name originally consecrated to the true God, and derived from the songs of the church, that celebrate him as the Almighty Being, who rises to avenge his enemies, the beast appropriates to himself, as his adherents had already in ver. 4 claimed for him the

[1] אדון without the article is used of the Lord in Ps. cxiv. 7. The *Jod* is *commonly* in the proper names a connective vowel, and not the suffix—see Ewald, p. 499, Anm. 2. So also in other proper names, which are compounded of Adon: Adoniram (Jehoram corresponds), the high lord, a designation of him, to whom the bearer of the name was devoted, as so many similar names—for example, Eliab, God-father, Joab, Joel, Jehoshua; Adonijah, the Lord is Jehovah (not *my* Lord.) The קים is used of the Lord, who rises up to the help of his people, and for vengeance on his enemies; comp. קומה יהוה in Ps. iii. 7. vii. 6, ix. 19, x. 12; also Ps. xii 5, xliv. 26, lxviii. 1. The name took its rise from these passages of the Psalms; as indeed it was very natural that the Psalms, whose words were continually sounding in the ears of the Lord's people, should especially exercise an important influence in the formation of names. A reference is found to those passages even in Is. xxxiii. 10. The name Asrikam is formed in the same way; the help (the Lord as helper) rises up, resting on Ps. xliv. 26.—We must take the name Adonikam in no other signification than that in which it occurs in the fundamental passages; not, for example, with Vitringa in the sense of the Lord's enemy; which is also grammatically inadmissible.

name Michael. By this reference of the name to its original destination, its blasphemous character is heightened; *q. d.* not that one, the miserable product of the vain imaginations and arrogant claims of his wretched worshippers, it is not he who is the Lord, but I, whose omnipotence is palpable to all; it is not he, who arises to help his poor worshippers, and execute vengeance on his enemies, but I that arise to extinguish those wretched saints with their crucified One and their God. Besides, the name Adonikam in its original reference to the living God reacts against the claim, as also the number 666, according to what is presently to be remarked, at once indicates the claim, and marks its presumptuous and shameful character.—Our second problem was to show, *that a direct relation exists between the number and the nature of the beast.* That this is the case appears, besides the reasons already adduced, from the circumstance, that in the immediately following verse, the number 144,000 occurs with manifest design, and so, that it is used simply and directly, without any intervening expression, of the church. The 666 is, as it were, the swollen, blown up six, the six in its highest potency, but still, even when swelled up and increased to the uttermost, no more than the six. This number has in Scripture but a very subordinate dignity. As the five only occurs as the half of the ten, the broken number of perfection, so the six appears either (as often, in particular, in the arrangement of the Psalms, for example in Ps. vii., lxxx.), as the half of the twelve; or as the preliminary step to the seven (for example in Job v. 19; Prov. vi. 16) therefore in a subordinate relation to the two numbers, which are formed by a similar combination of three and four, and which generally, but especially in the Apocalypse, are consecrated to the church. (See in reference to the twelve on ch. vii. 4.) By the six being carried through units, tens, and hundreds, the number marks the soaring pretensions and might of the beast; while, on the other side, the relation of the six to the seven and twelve, implies, that in respect to the church he still after all came short. To the number 666 thus explained, corresponds the number three-and-a-half, which in the Apocalypse is the signature of the apparent victory of the world over the church—see on ch. xii. 6—14—merely on account of its relationto the number seven. Even Irenaeus, in his early age, seeks in the number 666 an im-

port by itself, brings it into connection with the nature of the beast. He supposes a connection between it and the image of sixty cubits high and six cubits broad, which Nebuchadnezzar caused to be set up in the plain of Dura (Dan. iii. 1, and my Beitr. I., p. 94.) And, indeed, if we look upon this image, not with our own, but with Israelitish eyes, if we consider the great attention which was paid to numbers in Old Testament times, as recent investigations have shown, nothing is more natural than to suppose, that the book notices the dimensions of that symbol of the ungodly power of the world (for such the image was), because it saw in these a shadowy representation of the nature of that power. So colossal, and yet indossolubly bound to the fatal six, the broken twelve, and the incomplete seven! The name of the valley, too, is ominous. It properly signifies the valley of the funeral pile (comp. Ezek. xxiv. 5, 9.)—This is what we can maintain with certainty respecting the 666, as the number at once of the name of the beast, and of the beast himself. *Perhaps*, however, there is also an import in the mode of writing the number. It is expressed by the three letters χξς. That this writing by letters was the original form, is certified by Irenaeus.[1] The first and the last of these three letters are the common abbreviation of the name of Christ. The ξ standing in the middle, is like the serpent, under the name of which Satan appears in ch. xii. 9, xx. 2. Through the whole, therefore, the Antichrist, that is raised up by Satan, is placed before our eyes. This ingenious hypothesis was first advanced by Heumann, and afterwards recommended by Herder. But we are not to seek in it the chief matter, it is only a thing of secondary moment.—The other explanations are to be altogether rejected. The wide-spread supposition, that the number 666 is made up of the aggregate numerical value of the letters of a name, is disproved by the following reasons among others. 1. For the solution of so common an enigma, there is required no wisdom and no understanding. A cunning Jew is as capable of it as an enlightened Christian. 2. It is impossible by this view to come to a certain explanation of the sacred riddle. Even Irenaeus remarks, that this number is

[1] It is evident also from this consideration, that where the number has been written out, the gender of the words is differently given, sometimes ἑξακόσιοι, and sometimes ἑξακόσια.

to be got from a multitude of names; and one only needs to glance at the numberless solutions, that have actually been attempted on this ground, to be convinced, that such a riddle could have no place in the "Revelation of Jesus Christ." Not even the simplest conditions necessary to the solution are given. It is never so much as said, for example, in what language the name is to be sought. 3. Most of the advocates of this view set out from the idea, that John had in his eye a common proper name of the beast. But in a book which never employs common proper names, which everywhere makes use of descriptive names, we can expect none but such also in regard to the beast. 4. The most current explanations of this sort, for example Lateinos, mentioned even by Irenaeus, Nero Caesar (a ludicrous contest, too, about the prior right to this miserable discovery!), furnish a name which does not properly suit the beast; since this represents *the whole of the ungodly power of the world,* not simply or peculiarly Rome, and far less still, a particular Roman king; so that it is not worth while to advance any other considerations that might be urged against this name. The defenders of the view, which refers it to the papacy, have set forth the opinion, that the number 666 announces the period during which the beast was to continue. Luther took the lead here. In the German Bible with marginal notes, it is said on this passage: "666 years, so long lasts the worldly papacy." But how could the number apply to the period of the beast's continuance? The number must be descriptive of the *nature* of the beast. Otherwise, it could not go by the side of the name, so that the mark should consist *either* of the name, *or* of the number. How also could one obtain the victory, according to ch. xv. 2, over the number of the beast, if this announces only the period of its duration? Further, it were a misplaced appeal to wisdom and understanding, if the problem were merely to discover, what not a word seems to indicate, that the number of the beast is the period of his duration, (though, in the whole context, the beast's duration never comes in question), and that 666 is simply 666 years. One might have much wisdom and understanding, and never light upon this; and one might want all wisdom and all understanding, and yet discover it. How little does the wisdom suit here, according to Bengel's own explana-

tion! "He who sanctifies God in his heart, who abides in the true fear of God, and with his soul cleaves to the salvation of Christ, is wise. Though he may not be discerning for himself in natural things, nor able to discover much, yet, if the good and the evil are set before him, he still has a sound taste to reject the evil and cleave to the good." And then it must be left to each one's own liking to find out in history where the commencement of the period is to be made! Usually, and in particular by Bengel, the age of Gregory VII. is fixed upon as such. But with that starting-point the hypothesis has already long since been wrecked on the facts of history.

It still remains for us to examine the more important views that have been taken of this section, different from the one we have given. And a regard to history demands, that we should, first of all, subject to a careful investigation the view which refers it to the papacy. Bengel says, "As old as is the description here given of the papacy, so old also is the testimony to the truth, by which this prophecy is applied to the papacy. This was done long ago by the Waldenses, and afterwards by the followers of Wickliff and Huss. Such was the case before Luther's time, and by him the light was still more widely diffused." The two most valuable expositors of the Revelation, Bengel and Vitringa, have advanced everything that could support this interpretation. And the authority of the former especially still carries such weight with many, that the opinion almost possesses with them the character of an article of faith. He says, "The beast from the sea is the pope; the beast from the earth is that power which most particularly supports and defends, though from interested motives, the doctrine of the pope's power. Whether and how much the orders of the Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, the Inquisition, etc., have contributed to this end, it is still impossible to compute."

This explanation, however, is first of all opposed by *the connection in which this chapter stands with ch. xii.* The beast from the sea is the instrument by which the dragon carries on his persecution, which was described in ch. xii. (see the introduction to ch. xiii.) If, therefore, the beast were the papacy, it must also be the papal persecution of Christianity, of which ch.

xii. discourses. But in that chapter the description of the persecution follows immediately after the narrative, which relates how the power of Satan was broken by the atonement of Christ. It is rage for this defeat, which calls forth the persecution. In ver. 13 it is said, "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman who brought forth the man-child." If we understand by the persecution that of the papacy, then the revenge of Satan was a very late one; he must have restrained himself for a full thousand years. It would also be singular, if the heathen persecution of the church, which commenced soon after the ascension, and continued to rage for centuries, under which John himself had to suffer, should have been entirely unnoticed, and yet a persecution delineated, which did not commence till a thousand years afterwards. Add to this, that ver. 15—17 of ch. xii. cannot be explained, if by the persecution we understand the papal one—the commentaries of those who do so, need only to be looked into, to convince any one how utterly they grope in the dark—while by being understood in reference to the heathen persecution, they admit of a quite easy explanation. Further, Satan appears in ch. xii. under the name of the dragon. This indicates that the beast, which persecutes the church as his instrument, is a *purely worldly* power, without the intermixture or appearance of what is spiritual, and without ecclesiastical properties. For the dragon is everywhere employed in the Old Testament only as an emblem of purely worldly powers. The Papal persecution might justly have been assigned to the agency of Satan, but not to that of the dragon.

As another argument against the explanation of the papacy, may be mentioned *the relation of this group to the two groups of the seven seals and the seven trumpets.* The oppression of the church, and the execution of judgment on the persecutors, is the theme which belongs in common to this group and to the other two. The latter manifestly possessed a preparatory, an introductory character. The relation can only be of this nature, that there a *general* delineation is given of the victory of Christ and the overthrow of the world, while in this group begins the *detailed* representation; as quite similarly in the prophets, a general announcement often precedes the mention of particulars. Thus in Nahum, ch. i. 3—6, the appearance of the Lord to execute judg-

ment on the *earth* is revealed, and then the prophet goes on to describe the judgment on Nineveh, the particular earthly power which in his day threatened destruction to the kingdom of God. So also Isaiah, in ch. xiii., after unfolding the Lord's purpose to judge the earth, immediately proceeds to proclaim the overthrow of Babylon. If the relation were to be made out differently —if it were to be supposed that the two former groups and this latter one refer to *different* victories of Christ and discomfitures of the world, then the two first should want details, and the last a general foundation. If, then, the papal persecution was here the subject of discourse, those two earlier groups must needs also refer to the papal persecution, if not exclusively, yet so as distinctly to embrace it. This, however, cannot be the case, simply on account of ch. ix. 20—to say nothing of other reasons—as the sins there mentioned are of a distinctively heathen character.

Again, the explanation that finds the papacy here, is *at variance with the historical starting-point of the book.* The Apocalypse was written at the time of a bloody heathen persecution which arose against Christianity. Its aim is a thoroughly practical one, being designed to comfort and animate the faint and desponding minds of believers. We would not affirm that in a book of this nature the papacy could not possibly be the subject of discourse. The Revelation of Jesus Christ was not intended merely for the *present*, but for the church of all ages. We do maintain, however, that primarily the subject of discourse must be that persecuting power, under the oppression of which the church sighed during the time then present, and such other powers as, in the nearer and more distant future, had the same root as that. And an exposition, which results in finding that only the most general account is given of the heathen persecuting power, that we can learn nothing of the fate of heathen Rome (for the first two groups leave us quite in the dark as to that), that all the details have respect to a hostile power, of which no suspicion had as yet begun to be entertained, and which was to be of an essentially different character from the one that then threatened the church with destruction—such an exposition must necessarily be false. The whole literature of prophecy presents nothing analogous to it. *Everywhere we find the prophets manifesting solicitude primarily for the necessities of the present*

time. Isaiah, for example, during the oppression exercised by Assyria, in the first instance, and in the most particular manner, announces the coming deliverence from this worldly power; and when he at the sametime foretells a similar deliverance from a still future Chaldean power, the future oppression, whose elements had already begun to exist, as the Chaldean dominion was even then shooting up, lay in the same line with the present one, and the application of what was said to the relations then existing was perfectly obvious. "When did a father give a stone to the son that asked of him bread?" and yet this would really have been done here. Let us but transport ourselves to the times of Domitian, so as vividly to realize the position of believers when that tyrant was persecuting the church, and we shall soon feel that such cold comfort could be to them nothing but a bitter irony. Let us imagine ourselves in the position of John himself, when he was in Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, banished to a desert island by the Roman tyrant, bearing the sufferings of all Christendom as in the microcosm of his own heart (2 Cor. xi. 29), and ask ourselves whether it would have been at all natural for us, when living in such a time, to withdraw ourselves entirely from it, and start off to a future that was but slightly connected with it? The interpretation, which refers all to the papacy, arose at a time when people were called to suffer bitter things from the papacy. It proceeded from a desire to find, under such circumstances, direct consolation from Scripture. Must not John himself, then, must not the first readers of the book, have earnestly desired the same consolation in their sufferings? And what could have caused it to be withheld from them? Do not the epistles to the seven churches in Asia plainly show that the Apocalypse was primarily intended for the behoof of the apostle's contemporaries? that it must consequently meet, in the first instance, the necessities of *their* condition? that by its composition John sought more immediately to fulfil the obligation which lay upon him in respect to his official sphere of duty, and "by pen and ink" to furnish them with what he could not administer by his presence? in a word, that John had throughout in view his "companions in tribulation?" The interpretation that regards the papacy as symbolised by the beast, arose at a time when men had not felt the force of such considerations,

when they still did not understand, how prophecy, though not *bound* to the present, must yet have an actual *starting point* in the present, must always connect itself with present necessities, questions and complaints, and never can swim loosely in the air. Now, however, when no one scarcely can fail to attain to this understanding, to attempt to defend such a mode of exposition would be a sheer anachronism.

Moreover, *the relation of our prophecy to Dan. vii. is against the interpretation in question.* The symbol of the beast in Daniel denotes purely *worldly, godless, God-opposing powers,* without anything of a nobler kind in appearance, without the intermixture of any better elements, powers in palpable opposition to the kingdom of God. The papacy does not stand on the same line with such powers, not even in the view of those who take up the strongest position against it. It would be a perplexing thing, and detrimental to the uniform character of Scripture symbolism, if under the same symbol something essentially different had been presented to John. Further, the beast here is a composite creature formed out of the different beasts in Daniel. It must, therefore, comprise within itself the particular phases of the ungodly power of this world, which in Daniel was represented under a succession of different beasts. Otherwise, confusion must be introduced into the symbolism of Scripture. But if the papacy is understood by the beast, this reference to the particular phases of the worldly power in Daniel is entirely lost. The beast here has on one of his heads, the seventh, ten horns. These point back to Daniel. There, in ch. vii. 24, the ten horns are ten worldly kingdoms, into which the fourth world-monarchy falls on its dissolution. If by the beast here the papacy is understood, the connection between the ten horns of the Revelation and those of Daniel is wholly destroyed.

Still further, the interpretation before us is proved to be untenable *by comparing the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians.* It forcibly impresses itself upon us, that the *adversary* there, "who exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped," stands in a close relation to the beast here; as has from the first, indeed, been acknowledged. That adversary, however, is not a disguised, but an avowed opponent. He appears in ver. 4, compared with Dan. xi. 36, as the antitype of Antiochus Epiphanes

in his flagrant impiety. (Havernick: "A very special mark of Antiochus Epiphanes was his utter want of religion, which led even heathen historians to bring the strongest animadversions against him: he plundered the temples of all divinities.") He does not come in the name of God or of Christ, but he exalts himself above all that is called God, will tolerate no God above himself, nay, not even *beside* himself. In the whole description no trace is to be found of *hypocrisy*, of a Pharisaical *appearance*. Often has his pseudo-ecclesiastical character been argued on the ground, that "he sits in the temple of God." The temple of God is his church. This, certainly, must be admitted; but the meaning of the statement simply is, that he presses in upon the church from without, and, not content with the homage of the world, he lays claim to the homage of her members, after the manner stated by Pliny, who tells us that he constrained the Christians to do honour to the image of the emperor, and to curse Christ. So already Olshausen: "The Antichrist will seek to drive Christ, the true object of worship, out of the church, and set himself up in his room." Especially, if we take properly into account the connection between ch. ii. and i., we shall not be able to entertain a doubt, that the first great phase of the appearance of the adversary was the rising up of heathen Rome against Christ and his church, of which even at the time, when the epistle was written, there were some preparatory symptoms, as the readers of the epistle knew from painful experience, but which first attained its full height in the time of Domitian. The first great fulfilment of the declaration in ver. 8, "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming," was the overthrow of heathen Rome. The last great phase of the appearance of the adversary is described to us in Rev. xx. 7—9, and we see with our own eyes how it is making way for itself. It is also to be noted, that the adversary of St Paul corresponds, not specially to the *second* beast, as Vitringa and others suppose, but rather to the first in conjunction with the second.

What is said of the beast is of such a kind for the most part, that it is not applicable to the papacy. We shall here only specify what more readily presents itself. Whoever desires more, may find

it in the exposition, and in the refutation to be given afterwards of the view that has now become current.

First of all here, the name of *the Beast* falls to be noticed, denoting, as it does, the *low, earthly* mind, opposed to all that is God or godly—*regular godlessness*. If this name is properly interpreted, we shall soon acknowledge, in presence of the chief representatives of the papacy—a Gregory VII. or an Innocent III., for example—that it is not applicable to the papacy. With all the accusations that may be brought against them, from an evangelical point of view, they still cannot be charged with having a a *bestial mind*, excepting by setting history at defiance. It is impossible to deny their having had "a zeal for God," and this lies out of the sphere of the beastly. The importance of this argument is evident alone from the circumstance, that those who advocate the reference to the papacy, such as Bengel, have found it necessary to ascribe to the symbol of the beast a false signification.

In determining the import of the *seven heads* the interpretation for the papacy is in perplexity, and no agreement has been come to in regard to it. The different views bear the character of mere random guesses. They are all dashed to pieces by the express statement of the author in ch. xvii. 9. And so are they all by the fact, that the ten horns, by which, according to the view in question, must be denoted the kingdoms yielding homage to the papacy, are placed on the seventh head.

The beast bears on his horns *diadems*. These in the Apocalypse are the symbol of royal dignity. They meet us at the very outset, with the manifest design of preventing misapprehensions, and of forcing on us the conviction, that the beast is not a spiritual, but a purely worldly power; not an ecclesiastical, but simply a civil dominion.

The beast bears on his head *names of blasphemy*. This points to a manifest opposition to God and Christ, and does not accord with the papacy, which even amid its loftiest pretensions has always represented itself but as a servant and living organ of God and Christ.

The beast according to ver. 2 is an instrument of the dragon, his visible representative upon earth. The papacy was not re-

garded as a purely satanic institution, even by those who lived in the times when the contest with it was hottest. At least, when they bethought themselves, they recognized along with the satanic, also a divine element. Such especially was the case with Luther. He says, for example, in the epistle to two pastors of the Anabaptists, written in the year 1528 (W. W., p. 2646), "But we acknowledge, that under the papacy there is much Christian good, nay all Christian good, and also that it has come from thence to us; namely, we confess, that in the papacy there is the true Holy Scripture, true baptism, the true sacrament of the altar, the true keys for the forgiveness of sins, the true office of preaching, a better catechism than the ten commandments, the articles of the creed, the Pater Noster. Even as on the other side, he too (the pope) confesses, that with us (though he condemns us as heretics), and with all heretics are the Holy Scriptures, baptism, the keys, the catechism, etc. O how hypocritically dost thou speak here! How do I speak hypocritically? I say, what the pope has in common with us. And he, in return, acts a like hypocritical part towards us and the heretics, and tells us what we have in common with him. I shall play the hypocrite still more, and cannot do otherwise in the matter. I say, that under the pope, there is true Christianity, nay the real quintessence of Christianity, and many pious and eminent saints." The concessions which Luther here and in other places makes to the papacy, loudly contradict the supposition, that by the beast the papacy is to be understood. So also does the fact, that the Evangelical church recognizes the baptism of the Roman Catholic. A church, whose centre is Satan's vicegerent, can have no true sacraments.

An argument against the notion of the papacy being symbolized by the beast, is contained in ver. 3, and was already noticed in the remarks on the verse. It was shewn, that, by this verse, *the beast must have been in existence at the time of the atonement of Christ.* In place of the *death* of the beast, those expositors are obliged to substitute a dangerous merely, but not actually mortal wound, which was to be inflicted on him by the civil power. They arbitrarily tear asunder the overthrow of the beast here from that of the dragon in ch. xii.

According to ver. 4 the world in the first instance worships

the dragon, because he gives power to the beast, and then the beast himself. The advocates of the view now under consideration know not what to make of this worship of the dragon. Even the worshipping of the beast, in the sense in which it is taken here, as connected with the open denial of God and Christ, cannot be historically proved, if by the beast we understand the papacy.

What is to be understood by the *second* beast, has never been agreed upon by those, who refer the first beast to the papacy. The contrast is this, that the one is an *external*, and the other a *spiritual* power. This is clearly shewn by the *Lamb's horns*, which in ver. 11 are attributed to the beast. But such a contrast cannot be pointed out, when the interpretation is adopted, that looks to the papacy. In that case the first beast becomes in part at least, nay predominantly a spiritual power. The name of the *false prophet*, by which the nature of the second beast is distinguished from the first, suits also equally well to this. One cannot understand how it can denote, for example, the monkish orders in contrast to the papacy.

Insuperable difficulties are presented by ver. 14.[1] The subject there is not image-worship generally, but the *image of the beast*, and the seducing of the whole world to worship it. But history knows nothing of the fabrication of images of the papacy, and of a worship that was paid to these.

Then, the interpretation is completely wrecked on ch. xvii. 3, according to which the woman, Rome, sits on the beast.

Thus, the delineation of the prophet contains much, that does not suit when applied to the papacy. And, on the other hand, it contains nothing, which is properly characteristic of the papacy. Not a trace even exists in it, of *a pious appearance, of an outwardly ecclesiastical character*. In every part of it *hostility to Christ in its rudest form, in undisguised nakedness*, meets us. The Holy Spirit would be a bad painter, if he had meant after such a fashion to delineate the papacy. Bengel has not produced the shadow of a proof for his proposition, that the beast is a power, *spiritual* as well as worldly, opposed to the kingdom of Christ; although it was this, which above all he

1 Vitringa says on this verse: Nostrarum tamen partium interpretes, fateor, ipsi quoque hic fluctuant, acsi consisterent in lubrico.

required to prove. Neither the name of blasphemy, nor the worship, nor the false prophet, lead to any such result. But if this proposition is incapable of proof, it is all over with the interpretation in question.

The reasons, which have been adduced by those, who advocate the view we are controverting, are not of a kind to detain us long.

Rome, it is said, is, in ch. xviii. 2, doomed to destruction. But since Rome still remains, it could not have been heathen Rome that was meant, it must have been Christian Rome. The answer is plain: The Rome, whose destruction is announced, is, according to ch. xvii. 18, "The great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." This world-wide dominant Rome has really disappeared without leaving a trace behind. Nothing now remains of the all powerful imperial Rome, which existed in the days of the apostle.

The name of the false prophet, it is said, points to false teachers, who go about in the mask of ecclesiastical authority; and so, we can only understand by the first beast, which the second serves, a pseudo-ecclesiastical power. But even in Deut. xiii. and xviii. 20, prophets are discoursed of, who speak in the name of other gods, and endeavour to draw away the people to serve other gods; in whose case, therefore, that appearance of ecclesiastical authority must have been wanting. In 1 Kings xviii. 19, mention is made of the prophets of Baal and Aschera. In Matth. xxiv. 24, it would be an arbitrary limitation, if we should understand by the false prophets only wolves in sheep's clothing, as also by the false Christs are to be understood not solely, nor even principally the poor creatures, who appeared under the name of Christ or of the Jewish Messias, but much rather those, who in avowed opposition to Christ laid claim to what belongs only to him.

In ch. xvii. 4, 5, zeal is ascribed to the woman, who sits upon the beast, for the diffusion of false doctrine, which she violently forced upon the whole earth. This does not suit *heathen* Rome, which allowed the nations she conquered to live in the quiet exercise of their religion, but it points to *Christian* Rome! To this Bossuet long ago justly replied, "What an illusion! The prophets have said as much of Tyre, of Nineveh, and of Babylon, which beyond doubt were not corrupt churches." But he could

not pluck the objection up by the root, because he, too, adhered to the wrong explanation of zeal for false doctrine. It is not this that is spoken of, but thirst for conquest.

Mark conceives, that as heathen persecutions had already been discoursed of in ch. xii., and as the description of the beast comes after this, it must refer to a later power, that was to appear in opposition to the true church. This argument, however, rests on an entire misapprehension as to the relation in which ch. xiii. stands to ch. xii. In the heathen persecution there would then be no mention of any human instrument.

According to Bengel's view, the beast must first denote the Papacy, "in a succession of popes, who for a long period one after another exercised an ungodly power under a godly name;" and then a single personage, in whom at last the ungodliness of the Papacy should culminate. On this ground it has been argued against the view we maintain, that "heathenism (more correctly: the heathenish, ungodly power of the world), the abstract thing, is still not seized and cast into the lake of fire." But the same thing is declared in ch. xix. 20 of the false prophet, as well as of the beast. If that is to be understood of an ideal person, the same may also be understood of the beast. Such modes of representation must, certainly, appear strange to one, who does not reflect, that John was in the Spirit, when he received the Apocalypse; one who sets forth the principle, that "prophecy is anticipated and condensed history;" one who has no idea, that in vision the spiritual must be invested with body, though this is still but an external veil;—but then it is needless to argue farther with such a person.

Finally, it is alleged, that what is said of the beast does not suit the heathen Germanic princes, "who for the most part so readily received Christianity. The saints were not persecuted by these princes till the latter had been received into the Christian church." Undoubtedly, German heathenism forms, according to our view, a seventh phase of the ungodly world-power. But who can deny, that it also shewed itself to be such, without flying in the face of history? Did not the blood of martyrs flow profusely among the tribes of Germany, before they were converted to Christianity? See on ch. xvii. 14. Besides, it is said of the ten kings, who formed the seventh phase of the ungodly power

of the world, in ch. xvii. 12, "They received power as kings one hour with the beast;" so that the comparatively short continuance of their opposition to the Lamb is expressly and strikingly noted.

The interpretation, which considers the Papacy represented by the beast, belongs to a time long since gone by; a time, when the ungodly and God-opposing elements of the Papacy came prominently out, and the proper, the capital enemy of Christianity had almost entirely vanished from the field. At such a time this interpretation was natural, and in a sense necessary. But now, in quite altered circumstances, in the presence of another, far worse and more formidable enemy, common to us with those, who live under the Papacy, it can, one would think, only be upheld by an excessive conservatism, which would not part even with the hair and the nails. That ignoring of the Christian elements in the Papacy, which lies at the bottom of this interpretation, and against which the feelings even of the earlier interpreters sometimes loudly reclaimed,[1] carries with it now no small degree of criminality.

But while we thus decidedly oppose this interpretation in regard to the Papacy, which imposes on the word of God a very serious exaggeration (how differently does the Apocalypse speak of Laodicea, which had yet declined far enough!), we are far from denying all applicability of what is written of the beast to the Papacy. Beyond the narrow sphere of strict prophecy, there is a wide one of *application*, which takes into account only some leading points of agreement. There have been times in which the Papacy has looked very like the beast. But in making such applications, we must not only be careful to confine them within proper limits, but also should never forget our own faults, lest the judgment of God fall on ourselves. "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye."

We turn now to the consideration of that view of the beast, which has become the most current in the strictly theological

1 Vitringa says: "Ego saltem ita affectus sum, ut hanc bestiam cum prostibulo illi insidente nolim interpretari de Roma Christiana, nisi extrema necessitas me ad id adegerit. Non quod praecipuos hujus bestae characteres in Roma, fide et moribus corrupta, non videam: sed quod, *nescio quo animi motu*, hic fere horream dicere quod verum est Quis enim, qui rem ipsam rite meditatur, absque horrore cogitet, ecclesiam Christi degenerasse in bestiam tam feram et immanem, qualis illa est, quae depingitur in Apoc. Bengel arms himself against this feeling by the consideration, that he used no hard word excepting what he found in the text, and which he could not change.

field. This is as follows: By the seven heads of the beast are to be understood, according to the explanation of the Apocalypse itself, besides the seven hills of Rome, also seven kings. All concurs to show, that by these are meant the seven first emperors of Rome; as also by the beast itself, to which the seven heads belong, nothing else can be understood than primarily the Roman monarchy in general as an impersonation of the antichristian power of the heathen world. The beast has a double meaning; first, that of antichristian heathen Rome, the Roman world-monarchy, inasmuch as the seven heads are the seven Roman emperors; then, that of the personal Antichrist, or the concrete person of the Roman antichristian State, whose historical appearance is regarded as an eighth head of the beast. (N.B. The beast itself the eighth head of the beast!)—Of those seven Roman emperors five, at the time the vision was seen, and manifestly also at the date of the composition of the Apocalypse, according to ch. xvii. 10, had already fallen, that is, had died; one, namely the sixth, was then in the possession of the government. The sixth Roman emperor, beginning with Augustus, is Galba. Under him, therefore, the Apocalypse must have been written. (Galba scarcely reigned eight months; so that the time when the Apocalypse was written is known very exactly.) From this historical stand-point, then, the author looks forth into the future. After the sixth a seventh also comes, who was to reign but for a short time. (The author would thus have correctly known the short continuance not only of Galba's reign, but also of Otho's.) Then it was thought Nero, as the personal Antichrist, should again appear, and in connection with the kings of the East destroy Rome.

This view, which is the one put forth by Ewald and Lücke, has been espoused by most recent commentators with blind confidence as the correct one, as well by the representatives of a believing theology, as by those of the Rationalistic school. Of itself it makes no pretension to a well-grounded and thorough investigation; but proceeds on the lowest views of the dignity of Holy Scripture, and, in particular, of the Apocalypse, which it would place in the same rank as common apocalyptic reveries, and on a most superficial exposition. At no distant period, it will be only occasionally noticed as a singular aberration. How-

ever, on account of its present momentary importance, we must give to it a careful examination, which may also enable us to supply what was the great desideratum in the interpretation generally adopted by the church. Had the church properly discharged its duty in the matter—had it not allowed itself to be drawn into a wrong path by undue polemical zeal, but attained to a right understanding of the matter, such an hypothesis would never have made its appearance. A thorough examination will also afford the advantage of plainly showing, how the want of due reverence for sacred Scripture, one of the fundamental errors of the day, of which no one can claim to be altogether free, brings ultimately confusion on those who, while destitute of it, apply themselves to the work of interpretation and criticism.

First question: Is the beast the antichristian worldly power of Rome? Expositors are divided between holding the affirmative of this, and understanding the beast of the Papacy. The latter opinion received some heavy blows from Grotius and Bossuet, though their own explanation presented too many weaknesses to be generally followed. The former is now the prevailing one; but is not less arbitrary and untenable than the other.

If the beast were the Roman empire, then the woman, who sits upon the beast, *must be the capital city in contradistinction to the empire.* This distinction between city and kingdom is a very questionable one. It has against it the analogies of the Old Testament, where usually the great monarchies of the world are represented by their capital cities. The Chaldean kingdom, for example, is contemplated under the symbol of Babylon. Through the whole of the eighteenth chapter Rome, the woman, manifestly represents the whole Roman empire. With the overthrow of the city Rome, also, the utter dissolution of that empire is afterwards identified. In ch. xix. 11, ss., entirely different enemies come upon the stage, a series of contemporaneous independent kings or kingdoms, whose power and greatness are rendered manifest by the circumstance, that the prophet sets against them the King of kings, the Lord of lords, who has many diadems (ch. xix. 12, 16.) The destruction of Rome is a catastrophe, according to ch. xvi. 9, which brings to an end one of the most important phases of the heathen worldly power. That the woman is Rome, not in contradistinction to the Roman kingdom, but as the con-

centration and representation of that kingdom, is clear, especially from ch. xvii. 18, "And the woman whom thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Here, for the city, we might substitute simply the Roman kingdom. But if the woman is the anti-Christian Roman kingdom, the beast which carries her can only denote the worldly power generally, as opposed to the kingdom of God, which was then wielded by Rome. Besides, how could it have been possible to apply what is said of the beast to the body of the Roman kingdom, separate from its head? The great power, the thirst for conquest and terribleness, the mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, the war against the saints, in all this the capital city is the soul, and whenever we look away from it we at once see, that the representation is no longer suitable to the kingdom. Then, if the beast were the Roman worldly power, as contradistinguished from the capital city denoted by the woman, the woman also must have occurred at any rate in ch. xiii., as in the case supposed, the beast and woman are inseparably united together. But in that chapter the beast appears without the woman. And the supposition, that in ch. xiii. the beast denotes the Roman dominion including the capital, and in ch. xvii. in contradistinction to it, would destroy the uniformity of the symbolism, which is so steadfastly adhered to in the Revelation, and which alone renders a sure interpretation possible.

This view, however, which considers the Roman kingdom as the beast, is more especially proved to be erroneous by the fundamental passage regarding the beast, which in ch. xvii., where the figure of the woman that sits upon the beast was to be delineated, is supposed to be known from the preceding part of the description, ch. xiii. 1, 2. The exact agreement of the first part of the description with the vision in Dan. vii. alone makes it probable, that the beast here is a composite of the four beasts in Daniel; that the plurality, which appears there in the beasts, is placed here in the head:—there, "I saw—and four great beasts came up from the sea;" here, "And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns." We may the rather suppose this, as otherwise nothing analogous would be found in Daniel for the seven heads, while yet the horns, an appurtenance of the heads, are derived from Daniel. With such an original pattern, it was

scarcely possible that the copy of what represented the whole power of the world should have been made to image only one of its phases. This would have destroyed altogether the relation of the Apocalypse to the prophecies of Daniel, which our author everywhere appears to resume and supplement. It would have introduced confusion into the symbolical representations of Scripture, the intelligibility of which necessarily depends on their uniformity, and is incompatible with an arbitrary and variable usage. —But we arrive still more certainly at the same result when we consider, that in ch. xiii. 2 the one beast is formed of the same component elements which in Daniel were distributed among the four beasts. One cannot but perceive that the beast has a composite character; that it does not, like the several beasts in Daniel, denote so many particular phases of the world's power, in its hostility to the kingdom of God, but that power generally; and that the particular phases it was to assume, are to be sought in the heads and horns, which are peculiar to the Apocalypse.— Something like an objection may be urged on the ground of what is held by several expositors, that the fourth beast in Daniel is composed of the three first.[1] Having such an example before him, the author of the Apocalypse may have exhibited under a composite form the last and most frightful manifestation of the world's power. But there is no foundation for that view of Daniel's vision. On the contrary, it is expressly said, that the fourth beast was quite diverse from the beasts before it (ch. vii. 7, 19); and we find from ver. 3, that all the beasts were peculiar. Such a compound, too, is from the outset scarcely conceivable. If the prophet saw in the three first beasts the worldly power under the symbol of actually existing beasts, it is not to be supposed, that in the fourth he should have introduced a mere ideal compound. Though he did not name the beast, he is not therefore to be held as giving up its at least conceivable reality.

When the Roman empire, or Nero, is understood by the beast, the parallelism among the three enemies of God's kingdom is destroyed. The two others are of such a kind that their enmity

1 Vitringa, p. 595: Descripta tamen haud dubie est ad imaginem belluae quartae, Dan. vii. 7, quae cum dicatur fuisse terribilis et horrendae speciei, plane videtur supponi esse illam compositam ex speciebus trium belluarum, quae Danieli ante hanc quartam in viso depictae erant.

attends the kingdom of God through the whole of its history. The first, the dragon, is the old serpent, who from the very beginning deceives the whole earth (ch. xii. 9, xx. 2), and whose power, formerly existing in greater strength, was broken by Christ (ch. xii. 9—11.) We must the less think of separating between this dragon and the beast, as of the latter seven heads and ten horns are given up to the dragon (ch. xii. 3.) The other, the second beast from the earth, the opposite of the wisdom that cometh from above, earthly, physical, demoniacal wisdom (comp. Dan. vii.), the false prophet, the opposite of true prophecy, which peculiarly belongs to the kingdom of God—represented, for example, by Moses, Daniel, the two witnesses, in ch. xi. 3, ss., as the representatives of that faithful witnessing which in the church of Christ never ceases, and in times of persecution and apostacy rises into unusual vigour,—this second beast has had his instruments in all ages, from the magicians of Egypt downwards.

Bengel remarks, "The heads of this beast are peculiarly his own, belonging to his nature. Hence, much is ascribed in the prophecy sometimes to the seven heads of the beast, sometimes to the beast himself—as the wound in ch. xiii. 3, 12, 14—and elsewhere not much more is said of the beast, because in the description of the heads it had itself also been described." Such a circumstance can only be explained by the beast being put for the worldly power in general, and its heads for the particular forms in which this manifests itself. For in that case it was only in the latter that the beast had its real existence, with them perished, and with them again returned to life. If, on the other hand, the beast represents the monarchy of Rome and the heads individual emperors, the connection comes to be of a much looser sort. The destruction of a particular head might even have been an advantage to the beast. Who would maintain, for example, that the death of a Nero was a heavy misfortune to the Roman empire, and that his return to life again should be considered as the healing of a deadly wound to the commonwealth?

The ten kings have *one* mind, and give up their power and authority to the beast, ch. xvii. 13. But they hate and lay desolate the woman, Rome, ver. 16. What painful violence must be done here, if one should understand by the beast the Roman empire? The beast must then denote here, not the emperor Nero as a represen-

tative and concentration of the power of Rome, but the deposed Nero as an individual in contrast to the Roman state. On the other hand, whenever we understand by the beast the power of this world generally, as opposed to the kingdom of God, and by the woman, that for the present was borne by the beast, Rome and the Roman empire, all becomes perfectly plain. The Apocalypse presents a double and very striking political prophecy in the strictest sense—first, the express announcement of the overthrow of the Roman dominion, uttered at a time, when still no visible indications of such a catastrophe appeared; then, the prediction that, otherwise than in the past, from the times of Pharaoh downwards, when one vast world-monarchy had always supplanted another, after Rome there was no general ruler of the world to be looked for, but the ungodly power of the world from the fall of Rome to its final destruction was to present a divided appearance. The destined heirs, too, of the Roman dominion, the ten kings or kingdoms, while they do fealty to the world's hatred toward the kingdom of God, still hate that possessor of the world's power, under whose persecution at the time of the Seer the church sighed, and, as instruments of judgment in the hand of God, execute upon her the recompense of God's righteousness.

The ten horns belong to the beast. But the kings, who are represented by these, cannot be any belonging to the Roman kingdom, for they act in hostility to Rome, and destroy her; they are not subordinate vassals, but kings of the earth with their armies, ch. xix. 18, 19, against whom the Lord of the church himself takes the field with his heavenly hosts; and so great is their power, that by their overthrow is completed the destruction of the heathen ungodly power generally, and the church enters on the enjoyment of a millenium of secure and undisturbed possession of the kingdom.

Second question: Are the seven heads of the beast the first seven Roman emperors?

That they are not, appears from this alone, that Satan has seven heads and ten horns, and upon the heads seven diadems, plainly as a mere reflection of his visible representative and agent upon earth. For, that Satan is viewed here as the moving principle of the conquering and despotic power of this world in its

violent assaults against the kingdom of God, through which he seeks to accomplish his wicked designs, is clear, not only from the name of the dragon given to him, but also from its being said, that "with his tail he draws the third part of the stars, and casts them on the ground," ch. xii. 4. The stars are rulers, and their being thrown on the ground denotes their overthrow and subjection. It is also evident, further, from ch. xiii. 2, where it is said that the dragon gives up his power, and his throne, and his great authority to the beast. Finally, it appears from comparing the great *red* dragon in ch. xii. with the *purple-red* beast in ch. xvii. 3. The blood-colour, the signature of conquest and tyranny, is common to the dragon and his earthly instrument. Now, the seven Roman emperors are far too tiny to be regarded as affording such a reflected image. There is wanting also in the most of them an essential element—hatred toward the kingdom of God, with which the four first had almost nothing whatever to do. "Nero," says Lactantius, "was the first to persecute the servants of God, he caused Peter to be crucified, and killed Paul." Tertullian also says in his Apology, "Turn up your annals; there you will find, that Nero was the first who raged against this sect, which then flourished especially at Rome." The reflection of the crown of an Augustus on the head of the red dragon would indeed be a singular anomaly.

The beast has on his head names of blasphemy, according to ch. xiii. 1; and according to ch. xvii. 3, the whole beast is full of names of blasphemy. Vitringa: "Names and designations are meant, which are in the highest degree blasphemous, and insulting to the true God and his true Son Jesus Christ. For such is what we properly call blasphemy; it is a smaller crime to assume the honours and titles of false and imaginary deities." That this is the right view of blasphemy, appears more particularly from ch. xiii. 6, according to which the blaspheming of God goes hand in hand with the blaspheming of his church and acting hostilely toward her. Direct blasphemy is also spoken of in ch. xvi. 9, 11, 21. Hence, the fact in question implies, *that all the seven heads have been related to the true God and his kingdom.* What is meant by blasphemy may be understood from the speech of the king of Assyria in Isaiah, ch. xxxvi. 13, ss., and xxxvii. 10, ss., in which he proudly exalts himself above the God of

Israel, and mocks all confidence in him; in which "he reproaches the living God," xxxvii. 4, and "blasphemes" him, ver. 6; and in ver. 23, he is represented as "lifting up his eyes against the Holy One of Israel." See also for similar blasphemies in Isa. x. 9, 10. The same thing appears from the example of Pharaoh, who on hearing the command of the Lord by Moses, "Let my people go," impiously exalts himself above God, and asks, "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice, and let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go." (Ex. v. 2.) It may yet again be learned from the example of the Chaldean monarch Belshazzar, when in mockery of the God of Israel he drank wine with his nobles, and wives and concubines, out of the gold and silver vessels, which his father Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from the temple at Jerusalem (Dan. v. 1); thus raising himself against the Lord of heaven, in whose hand his breath was, and whose were all his ways, and not honouring him, (ver. 23.) Who does not see, that in such a person as Augustus, for example, there was nothing to be found of blasphemy after this sort?

In ch. xvii. 9, it is said, that the seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits, and seven kings. It is clear as day, that there is not a double signification ascribed here to the seven heads, but that the second only serves as an explanation of the first. Even Bengel remarks, "It is certainly no satisfactory exposition, which takes a particular symbol in two quite different significations." Now, in the symbolism of Scripture generally, and especially of the Apocalypse, mountains uniformly denote, not particular kings, but kingdoms—see on ch. viii. 8. The kings, therefore, are not individuals, but ideal persons, personifications of kingdoms, the king of Babylon, of Rome, &c. Such phraseology occurs very frequently in the higher style of prophecy. For example, in Daniel vii. 17, "The four beasts are four kings, that shall arise out of the earth;" Vulg. regna; in ver. 23 and 24 for מלך, king, there is מלכו, kingdom. In ch. viii. 21, it is said, "The rough goat is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king." Isa. xxiii. 15, "Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years as the days of *one* king;" on which Michaelis remarks, "Not one royal personage, but one kingdom; *q. d.* so long as the Chaldean empire

lasted." See, on kings for kingdoms, Gesenius on Isa., I. p. 760. It is scarcely to be conceived, how such expositors as Vitringa could allow themselves to be carried away here by the mere appearance; he says, "It denotes, as every one sees, the seven-hilled city of Rome." So much only can be admitted here, that John saw in the seven hills of Rome a symbol of the seven-formed worldly power, of which Rome was then the possessor. But to understand the seven heads of the beast of the seven hills of Rome is in itself quite incongruous; between the image and the object thus represented by it, there exists no natural connection. Vitringa himself must admit, that "all the properties of the heads of the beast, as they are found in the two visions respecting the beast, cannot be pointed out in the hills, on which the beast sits, as is clear from ch. xiii. 3, and xvii. 10, 11." The groundlessness of the interpretation becomes more apparent by the consideration, that it would denote by one and the same symbol the seven hills of Rome and the seven kings, which have nothing properly to do with each other. And it becomes still more clearly manifest, when we glance into what goes immediately before, "Here is (in its proper place) the understanding that has wisdom." The meaning of this declaration was quite correctly explained by Vitringa, as intimating, that a quick discernment and wise discrimination in regard to spiritual things would be required of those who should understand aright what is written. It corresponds to the frequently repeated formulas of our Lord, He that reads, let him understand, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, He that can keep it, let him keep it; after which it is formed. It indicates, that the meaning is still mysterious to those, who have simply a sound natural understanding, who do not penetrate through the shell or rise above the letter, and by such cannot be properly understood. It sets forth as a canon for the right exposition, the sentiment expressed by Vitringa on ver. 10, "The explanation itself, which shall solve the enigma, presents a new enigma." It would be wonderful, after such an introduction, to begin with a statement, which contains in it no spiritual element, demands no spiritual apprehension. The words, "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits," according to the view most prevalent now, truly require no understanding that has wisdom.

Let one lay it before a school-boy, and merely tell him that the woman is Rome, and he will be quite ready with his answer. But that, according to our view, the demand for wisdom was not superfluous, is evident alone from the current misunderstandings on the subject. The mountains in the place of kingdoms, the symbolical mode of considering the hills of Rome, kings instead of kingdoms, the determining of the monarchies, which are not expressly named, but which complete the number seven—all this rises above the sphere of the ordinary understanding, and is in unison with what follows, where we never meet with a statement of such bald simplicity as the one before us is by the current interpretation.

The ten horns, which denote ten kings (ch. xvii. 12), that is ten kingdoms—as also in Dan. vii. 8, and Zech. ii. 1, the four horns are four kingdoms—do not exist along with the heads, but they sit upon the seventh head. The object was a double one—first, to bring out in what the seventh phase of the ungodly world-power agreed with the others; and then wherein it differed. The first object was served by the head, the other by the horns upon the head, by which the seventh form of the power was exhibited as a *divided* one. That the horns belong to the seventh head is manifest: the head is the natural place for the horns to be, and no sensible symbolism would mention head and horns with each other, if the horns were not to be conceived of as on the head. It is clear, farther, from ch. xii. 3, by which Satan has on his head seven diadems, which must of course be equally understood of the horns; but this could only be the case if the horns stand inseparably connected with one of the heads. It appears again from the circumstance, that in the beast, which rose out of the sea, the horns first were visible and before the heads, which only appeared afterwards, so that the horns must be regarded as placed on the heads. That this was the reason why, in the beast rising out of the sea, the heads were named before the horns, is clear from ch. xvii. 3, where, since no such cause any longer operated, the heads are mentioned before the horns: "a beast having seven heads and ten horns." There the prophet does not see the beast "arising," as he had done in ch. xiii. 1. There it is plain, that the horns are to be viewed as connected with the seventh head, because what in ch. xvii. 10 is declared of the seventh head

or kingdom, stands related to what is said in ver. 12, ss., of the ten horns, as the general outline to the filling up; so that the position of the horns on the seventh head cannot be doubted; for in this case alone is such a relation capable of explanation. The seventh king denoted by the seventh head had not yet come; and when he came, he should only continue for a short time. So also it is said of the ten horns, that they are ten kings, "who have not as yet received the kingdom, but they receive power as kings (to be and act quite independently) one hour with the beast." With the fall of the seventh head is coupled that of the beast (ver. 11), as it is, in like manner, according to ver. 17 and ch. xix. 20, with the fall of the ten horns or kings. But if any doubt still remained, it would be dissipated by the prophecy of Daniel. According to what is written there in ch. vii., there were to arise out of the fourth monarchy (by which, at the time of Christ, was generally understood the Roman empire), ten kings, represented by ten horns; that is—according to the usual language of the book—ten kingdoms, which had already, indeed, been symbolised by the ten toes of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's vision (ch. ii.): the fourth kingdom was first to be parted into two great kingdoms, the feet; then into smaller ones, the toes. These, and for the same reason also the horns, must denote kingdoms, because the whole image has to do, not with individuals, but only with kingdoms. In Daniel, however, in the fundamental prophecy, the ten horns exist, not along with the four beasts, but upon the head of the fourth and last beast. So here also must they belong to the seventh and last head. But if it is certain, that the ten horns or kingdoms belong to the seventh head, then the heads cannot denote royal personages, but only monarchies.

When the first seven Roman emperors are understood by the seven heads, the author must be held to have placed the overthrow of the Roman state in the *immediate future*. But at the time of the composition of the Apocalypse no grounds existed for such an expectation; and it would have been wonderful if a book, which, but a few months afterwards, when Vitellius ascended the throne, must have proved itself to be the production of a senseless visionary, should have risen to such high honour in the church.

We would not lay any great stress on the circumstance, that

the naming of *kings* in ch. xvii. 10 does not precisely warrant the expectation that the discourse should be exclusively of the Roman Cæsars; more especially as the word Cæsar is of frequent use in the writings of the New Testament. Nothing is proved by 1 Pet. ii. 17, for there the apostle speaks in a general way.—It is a more important objection, that no properly old and valid authority can be produced for numbering the Roman Cæsars from Augustus, on which the hypothesis we contend against rests; for only thus does Nero become the fifth. Tacitus has been improperly quoted in this connection, as has been already proved by Hofmann (Weiss. und Erf.). In the XII. Cæsars of Suetonius, we find Julius Cæsar, who had the substance, and from whom the name passed over to the others, even those who were not of his line, which expired with Nero (comp. Dio Cassius, p. 484, 713); so that, if he, the first, is left out, we have a body without a head. In Dio Cassius, Augustus is regularly called the *second* Cæsar (see Reimarus, p. 502.) Josephus, too, reckons from Julius Cæsar. But of peculiar importance is the expression, "five are fallen," in ch. xvii. 10. This does not at any rate suit those of the five emperors, who died a natural death. It indicates, that not individuals, but rather kingdoms and empires are to be thought of, for whose overthrow the term *falling* is the standing expression in Scripture—comp. xviii. 2, xiv. 8, xvi. 19, as also in the Old Testament, Isa. xxi. 9; Jer. li. 8; Amos v. 2. *Falling* is used in regard to individuals only if they have perished in war, not of persons who may have a violent end in some other way. By Isaiah and Jeremiah the *falling* is used expressly of Babylon, which according to our view is comprehended among the five. To the five here there is added in other passages of the Revelation a sixth, which was still in existence, the Babylon of the prophet's time, Rome.

Third Question: Do ch. xvii. 8 *and* 11 *point to Nero?*

There can be no doubt, that if they did, the Apocalypse must be regarded as the production of a merely human, and very miserable author. In ver. 1—7, by this view, the beast must denote the Roman power. In ver. 8 the beast must signify Nero, the Roman emperor, it must be observed, who had been driven from the throne, and who, it is supposed, was to come forth as the enemy of Rome; who, therefore, cannot for a moment

be thought of as a concentration of the power of Rome. In ver. 9 and 10, the author again, it is thought, sets out from the consideration of the beast as the image of the Roman power. But in ver. 11 the beast again becomes Nero. And this change is made without the slightest intimation on the part of the author, that he here takes the beast, the description of which he has already finished in ch. xiii., in a different signification. Further, Nero must appear in ver. 9, 10, as also in ch xiii. 3, as one of the seven heads of the beast; but immediately afterwards in ver. 11 as the beast itself. Truly, in Ewald's statement, "There is in reality not much that requires to be excused in the Seer," we should need to score out the *not*, if this interpretation were right. But since the defenders themselves cannot withhold from the author, as a man, their admiration, they must allow us in passing to entertain the suspicion, that these crudities belong not to him, but to them, his interpreters. Nothing but the most conclusive reasons could induce us to raise the question about *tendering excuses*, in regard to the author, rather than to them. But we soon discover, that what they allege in support of their reference to Nero, cannot stand a careful examination.

Ver. 11, it is thought, must especially point to Nero, "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." In him, who had already appeared as one of the seven, and was again to appear as the eighth, there can be no doubt, that we must understand Nero, who, according to the popular opinion at Rome, was to re-appear after his supposed death. At p. 249, Lücke says, "Then it is said of the beast, which was and is not, that is, of the personal Antichrist here, who had just been, but now was not, that he is the eighth in that succession of Roman emperors; and again, that so far as he already was, he was one of the seven, and goes into perdition." But there is a strong objection to this view in the import and position of the clause, "and is of the seven." That it is so in regard to the former, is evident from Lücke's finding an explanatory insertion necessary: "And *again*, in so far as he already was one of the seven." And in regard to the other, the position of the clause, the interpretation separates, "and is of the seven," in the most unsuitable manner from the other two: "He is the eighth" and "he goeth into perdi-

tion." But, on the contrary side, another and quite simple explanation of the passage presents itself, which entirely sets aside the reference to Nero. Of the seven, there was only one thing of moment brought prominently out in the preceding verses, that of the fall, or destruction. Hence, in the clauses, "And he is an eighth," and "he is of the seven," there is quite naturally to be supplied, "in the destruction;" and that there might be no doubt as to this being the thing to be supplied, it is expressly added at the close, "and he goes into perdition." The meaning is: with the overcoming of the seventh phase of the ungodly power of the world, that power generally goes down—comp. ch. xix. 20, where immediately after the second catastrophe, which subsequently to the fall of Rome, passes over the new manifestation of the worldly power, after the victory of Christ over the ten kings, the beast with the false prophet is seized and cast into the lake of fire. With that the ungodly power of the world comes to an end. At the close, indeed, of the thousand years of quiet and secure repose enjoyed by the church (the maintaining of which to be still future, is one of the sad consequences of conceiving the beast to mean the papacy), there is to arise a new and powerful display of hostility on the part of the world. But for reasons which have been already given, the Seer did not comprehend this under the symbol of the beast.

It is alleged, that Nero must also be meant in the clause, "the beast which was and is not," in ch. xvii. 11, as also in ver. 8, "The beast, which thou sawest, was and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition." So also ch. xiii. 3, where the prophet sees one of the heads of the beast as wounded to death, but whose deadly wound was healed. This last passage, however, cannot refer to Nero. If a beast's head is slain, the beast itself is also slain. But by the death of Nero the beast, to wit the Roman kingdom, was not at all affected. Further, that the wounding to death in the head at the same time reached to the whole beast, is clear from ch. xiii. 3, 4, by which, in consequence of the healing of the head, the whole earth wondered after the beast and his power. That the deadly wound of the head was deadly for the whole body, appears also from the parallel passages in ch. xvii., and other reasons already mentioned on ch. xiii 3.—The whole of the three passages are to be ex-

plained by ch. xii. 9, which teaches that through the bloody atonement of Christ, Satan is robbed of his power, and by John xvi. 33, where the Lord says, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." With this compare ch. xii. 31, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out." The power of this world, as opposed to the kingdom of God and wielded by satanic influence, *was;* it showed itself active and powerful during the two thousand years before Christ. It *is not;* it was wounded to death through Christ, and had as yet given only a few indications of life. But the prophet perceived, having the eye of his mind opened through the beginnings, which were made known to him by painful and personal experience, that it should revive again, that the saying, "I was dead and behold I am alive again," should also be verified in the case of the antichristian state, though certainly in an inferior manner, and without the addition, "for ever and ever." On this singular fact, this strange anachronism, this remarkable quid pro quo, this riddle, so incomprehensible till one goes into the sanctuary of God (Ps. lxxiii. 17), the prophet *wondered* (ch. xvii. 6, 7):—Not at the circumstance, that the worldly-power had the will—for all experience since the beginning of time, and the apostle's own declaration, that "the world lieth in wickedness" (1 John v. 19), could leave no room to wonder there—but that it should be allowed to rage so fiercely against the saints. The world itself also, whose conscience responded to the word, "I have overcome the world," looked with wonder (ver. 8), while it beheld the apparent opposite of this before its eyes in the revived power of the beast. The antidote to the wondering, which is presented in ver. 7, ss., by the angel to the prophet, is the *respice finem;* look to the approaching overthrow of the persecutors, now glittering in their pride, and of the ungodly power of the world generally; look to the ultimate fulfilment of the word, I have overcome the world; to the blessed time, when the loud acclaim shall be heard, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" Standing on this high watch-tower, the prophet could say with a firm voice, Non curo te Cæsar. There is nothing, then, requiring the supposed reference to Nero: nothing to necessitate or justify us in relieving the expositors of the monstrous absurdities referred to, and throwing them on St

John, the blessed Seer, who was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Nay, there are still other and weighty considerations against the reference to Nero.

The beast cannot fitly be an *individual.* The four beasts in Daniel are not individuals, but powers. In Ezek. ch. xxix. 3, the great dragon is the ideal person of the Egyptian king, the personified kingdom. So also in Ps lxviii. 30, "the beast of the reeds" (in the Eng. version, "the company of spearmen.") The boar out of the forest in Ps. lxxx. 13, is the king of Assyria. In the Revelation, too, the four beasts (ζῶα) in ch. iv., are the Cherubim, not angels, but ideal creatures, symbols of the earthly creation, after the four chief classes of beings that belong to it, man, cattle, wild animals, birds, representatives of the earth generally, along with the four and twenty elders, who represent the church upon the earth. The second beast in the Apocalypse, the false prophet, is an ideal person coming in a multitude of individuals to an actual existence. But the beast and the false prophet are together thrown into the lake of fire. How strange would this be, if the one were an individual, and the other an ideal person! Not less strange would be the juxtaposition in ch. xvi. 13, where the beast in the middle of the dragon and the false prophet appears like them as possessor of a spirit, which proceeds from him among the kings of the whole earth, like frogs that live and croak in unclean places. On the other hand, the ungodly power of the world is a worthy companion for the dragon and the God-opposing worldly wisdom. Like these it actually has a spirit, which it breathes forth, and with which it inspires its votaries.

If we compare ch. xvii. 6, "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration," and ver. 8, "And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, when they behold the beast, that was, and is not, and yet is;" it will appear, that the re-existence of the beast coincides with the drunkenness of the woman with the blood of saints and the martyrs of Jesus. Now, this is the case only, if we understand by the beast the ungodly power of the world. The restored existence of this power discovered itself in the frightful persecutions, which Rome suspended over the faithful.

Here it is an actual death that is spoken of. For, the beast returns from the abyss (ver. 8, comp. xi. 7); "it is not" (ib. and ver. 11.) Even ch. xiii. 3 is in favour of this, and not against it, as Lücke supposes (see on the passage.) The expression, "*as* it had been killed to death," refers not to the seemingness of the death, but to the traces of the absolutely mortal wound, which might be discerned on it, after it had returned to life again. This is manifest from the similar expression in ch. v. 6, "I saw a lamb as it had been slain." The lamb was actually killed. The obvious parallelism of the lamb and the beast demands for this passage an especial regard. The popular report, however, did not suppose the return of Nero from the dead, but, abiding by the merely natural territory, questioned the fact of his death, which very few persons had witnessed.[1]

Nero put an end to himself; ferrum jugulo adegit (Sueton.) But the head of the beast, according to ch. xiii. 3, was slain to death; it received a mortal blow from some foreign hand, as the lamb had done (and through this very lamb, which by dying overcame the world, and more immediately Rome, which through Pilate had given the sentence of death.)

No trace is to be found of those, who imagined Nero still to be alive, entertaining extravagant expectations regarding his future course. The report in this respect also occupied merely common ground; it went no farther than this, "that he lived and would soon return to the great detriment of his enemies." (Sueton.) The false Nero made no higher pretensions than to acquire anew, what the real Nero had possessed. But that something quite different is here affirmed of the beast, is evident alone from Ewald's remark on ch. xiii. 4, "They held this for a kind of supreme God, to whom none could be likened; a form of speech borrowed from the Old Testament, where it is frequently employed of the true God, Isa. xl. 25." Those extravagant expectations, then, must have been coined by the prophet's own hand, and without any proper occasion in the object. One who had lived so wretchedly, and still more wretchedly died, certainly afforded no ground for such expectations being cherished respecting him. The most

1 Tacitus Hist. II. 8. 1, Vario super exitu ejus rumore eoque pluribus eum vivere fingentibus credentibusque, Sueton. Nero. c. 57, Quasi viventis et brevi magno inimicorum malo reversuri.

absurd dreamer who, as a contemporary, had the personal existence and course of Nero before him, could never have thought of raising such a person to the dignity of the Antichrist. But even the modified report of the continued existence of Nero obtained credit only among the credulous populace.

Some notices, indeed, are to be found of a return to life in Nero being expected even by the more credulous Christians; but this opinion was confined to the lowest class, and is without any respectable authority. Augustine expresses his wonder at the stupidity of those who gave credit to it (multum mira est haec opinantium tanta praesumtio), and Lactantius, de mort. persecut. c. 2, simply characterizes them as senseless—deliri.[1] Besides, that notion had originated in a mistaken view of the meaning of the Apocalypse, and also of 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7. This is quite obvious from the passage in Sulpitius Severus.[2] It appears also from that of Lactantius. For, the senseless persons are represented, in the fragmentary account that is preserved of their reasons for such an opinion, as appealing to the analogy of the two prophets, who were transferred alive to heaven, and who in the last days are to precede the coming of Christ. In this they manifestly had respect to what is said of the two witnesses in the Apocalypse, by whom many, as still also Ewald, understand the literal Enoch and Elias—instead of the *spiritual* Moses and Elias, or the New Testament work of witnessing represented under the type of those two Old Testament servants of God—that work of witnessing, which no persecution of the church can suppress, which rather rises into more vigorous exercise, the more powerfully the world presses on the church, the more vehemently Pharaoh and Jezebel rage. But it is one thing to take up a matter like this, on the ground of a supposed authority, and because no other resource presents itself (since otherwise the most intelligent persons might be accounted fools, from the many

1 Ewald remarks on ch. xvi. 8, "That the passage refers to Nero was the unanimous opinion of the earlier Fathers," and points for proof to this passage of Lactantius, and besides to Sulpitius Severus. A striking contrast, the unanimous consent of the Fathers, and some senseless persons! How must the tradition, then, of the composition of the Apocalypse under Domitian have had on its side all authorities of any moment!

2 Hist. Sacr., L. 2, p. 373, Horn.: Creditur etiamsi se gladio ipse transfixerit, curato vulnere ejus servatus, secundum illud quod de eo Scriptum est; *et plaga mortis ejus curata est;* sub seculi fine mittendus, ut mysterium iniquitatis exerceat.

absurd interpretations that they have given of various parts of the Apocalypse), and a different thing to take it up at one's own hand.—Lücke certainly thinks, that the apprehension of Nero, reviving out of death and appearing as the Antichrist, can be proved to have prevailed among Christians of the first century independently of the Apocalypse. In this he follows Bleek, who, in the Theol. Zeitshrift II., p. 287, maintains, "that the earliest certain apprehensions of this kind among Christians are to be found, besides the Apocalypse, in the fourth book of the Sibylline verses, composed A.D. 79—80." But the fixing of this date rests on very doubtful grounds. After the re-appearance of Nero there were to follow several other facts, oracles which Bleek declares to have been "not perfectly intelligible," without considering that, till they can be found intelligible, it is needless to think of fixing any definite time. After the author has reached the close of his historical narrative, which he would have us to regard as prophecy, he launches forth into warnings and admonitions respecting the final judgment. And what is said there of Nero? Nothing more than this: The fugitive of Rome shall fly with a numerous army beyond the Euphrates, and march toward the west. There can be no doubt, when the related passage of Zonaras, p. 578 b., is compared (Reimarus on Dio Cassius), that the writer alludes to the expedition of the Pseudo-Nero under Titus, after the outburst of Vesuvius, which is mentioned immediately before in the Sibylline book. When the Sibyllist speaks of this false Nero as of the real one, this is simply to be explained, with Thiersch (Versuch, p. 413), "on the ground of such a mode of representation being the most in accordance with the mysterious, hyperbolical, and awe-inspiring character of the whole oracle." Nothing is said in it of what the false Nero was really to accomplish; not so much as a word of his being to take Rome. The contrary, rather, is clear from the following verse, according to which Antioch, on account of its folly (its foolish credulity), was to suffer much through the Romans. And from this passage it is clear, according to Lücke, "that in the first century the idea spread among the Christians, that Nero, like a sort of New Testament Antiochus Epiphanes, should immediately before the second coming of Christ return from the East as the "Antichrist," attack the kingdom of Christ, though he should be over-

come and perish in the attempt." Of Antichrist, of an attack on the kingdom of Christ, of anything happening "immediately before the second coming of Christ," there is not so much as a word! The single fact, that Nero accomplished nothing against Rome, shows that no sort of parallel can be found here for the modern exposition of the Apocalypse.

Finally, this exposition rests on the supposition, that the Apocalypse contains the doctrine of the Antichrist being an individual. But such a doctrine is from the outset not to be expected in it. St John, in his epistles, makes no mention of such an one. He expressly states, in ch. ii. 18, that the Antichrist is an ideal person, to be realised in a multitude of individuals; comp. ver. 22, iv. 3; 2 John ver. 7. Nor is any mention made of a personal Antichrist in the discourses of our Lord regarding his second coming, to which John alludes in his epistles, as they also contain the general plan, that is merely enlarged upon in the Apocalypse. They are, therefore, to be regarded as of decisive authority wherever the exposition is doubtful. But they speak only of false prophets and of false Christs, who should arise and draw away many into error, (comp. with 2 John 7, Matth. xxiv. 11, 24.) If from the firm position we have thus gained, we direct our eye to 2 Thess. ii., we shall there also not find the Antichrist as an individual, unless we leave out of view the use made in Scripture of the ideal person—which is, indeed, very apt to be done in the present day, when there is so little intimate acquaintance with the Old Testament. Most commonly the question is incorrectly put. It is so, for example, by Olshausen, when he remarks, "We cannot, without violence to this passage, deny the individuality of Antichrist. Not only is he expressly called, 'the man of sin,' 'the adversary,' but there is also ascribed to him a *parousia* as to the person of Christ, and a manner of acting such as is proper only to a person." The question is not, whether person or not person; but whether a real or an ideal person, such as we constantly meet with in the Psalms, of the wicked, the enemy, the adversary; where also a vicious realism has greatly damaged the work of exposition. But that the subject here is an ideal person is clear, if only no decisive proofs of the contrary can be adduced, from the parallel passages alone of the New Testament, which have already in part been referred to.

"Elsewhere, also," remarks Olshausen, "as for example in Acts xx. 29, 30; 2 Peter ii. 1, ss.; iii. 3, ss., Jude v. 18, ss., where the hostile forces and seducers of the last time are spoken of, it is always of several, not of a single individual, that mention is made." So also with Paul himself, besides the passages in his speech and writings referred to, in 2 Tim. iii. 11, ss.; 1 Tim. iv. 1, ss. If everywhere else we find, first, a real plurality in the enemies of Christ, and secondly, this plurality exhibited under the form of an ideal person, it should certainly not be without serious consideration, that we regard the Antichrist here as an individual; more especially, as the parallel with Christ afforded so natural an occasion for combining into an ideal person what properly consisted of scattered individuals. It is also in favour of the view of an ideal person, that the *falling away*, with which the apostle begins, would receive no farther notice, this subject would be entirely left undiscussed, if the declarative falling away at the commencement were not identical with the man of sin, &c. An explanation also is given by the apostle in the "strong delusion," in ver. 11; and another still more clearly indicating the ideal import of the person of Antichrist in the expression "mystery of iniquity," in ver. 7. Olshausen himself has said, "from the relation of this phrase at the beginning of ver. 7, to the words in ver. 8, 'and then shall that Wicked be revealed,' this mystery of iniquity can mean nothing but Antichrist." But the mystery of iniquity cannot denote a real person. For *mystery* can be used only of a thing; and only of such also could it be said, "it already works." Nor could it properly be said of a person, but only of a tendency or system, that it is *stayed* (letted.) Finally, it is an ideal person also "who withholds" in ver. 7, and before in ver. 6—the personification of the noble powers, that then watched and prayed for the church; or the ideal person of the good shepherd, in respect more immediately to the Thessalonians represented by the apostle himself in his writing to them. Of him, and such as him, we must primarily think in this connection (comp. ver. 15; Acts xx. 28; 2 Tim. iv. 2; 1 Tim. iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 1; Heb. xiii. 17.)

THE SECTION CH. XIV. 1—5.

Prophecy everywhere notices distresses, dangers, temptations, for the purpose merely of fortifying the heart in respect to them, and imparting under them counsel and consolation, "that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope," (Rom. xv. 4.) The character of the whole of this chapter is that of the administration of comfort, and, indeed, more immediately of an anticipatory administration of comfort, in prospect of the great tribulations and dangers delineated in ch. xii. xiii., that were to proceed from Satan, the beast from the sea, and the beast from the earth. Here first is an answer given to the most anxious of all questions, which must have been awakened by the preceding description—the question: Who, then, can be saved? In the prospect of such trials the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," almost died upon the lips. To help believers to utter it again with a vigorous manly voice—to place in a flood of light the parenthesis in our Lord's word—"that *(if it were possible)* they would deceive the very elect,"—which a weak faith is so apt to glide rapidly over; this was the first object, which John, or rather the Holy Spirit, who in this book acts peculiarly in that office of Paraclete, so prominently unfolded in the Gospel of John, had to accomplish. And he does accomplish it, by suddenly transporting us out of the tribulations of time with its conflicts and trials, and placing us on the heavenly Zion, where we find the company of saints gathered around their Saviour, after the warfare is finished, steadfast and unmoved in their confession, rejoicing in their victory, pure and holy, in spite of all the temptations which the earth had presented to them. The consolation also carries in its bosom an exhortation. Is fidelity possible—who would not aspire after it? Are the 144,000 gathered there around the Lamb, with his name and that of the Father on their foreheads—who would not strive unto blood to be of their number, and courageously resist everything that might try to blot out the sacred names from his forehead? In the two last verses especially does the admonitory import come distinctly out. This section, while it has a near relation to ch. vii. 9—17, is yet essentially different. *There* the heavenly glory is exhibited for

the consolation of those who should have to suffer *with* the world under the mighty hand of God, when visiting the world on account of sin; *here*, on the other hand, the guarantee afforded is, that fidelity to the Lord is no mere fancy—that it can triumphantly overcome all the assaults which it has to endure from the world. In the two sections, therefore, an essentially different assault is met, though they are both such as strongly beset believers. The proper import of the section before us is misapprehended by those who would find in it a representation of the future glory of believers, or of their recompense, which are only indirectly contained in it. But it is much more grievously misapprehended by those who would drag down to the earth what belongs to heaven, and conceive that the truth here represented is the preservation of the true church upon earth. *Indirectly*, no doubt, this is certified here; but when the heavenly band appears shining before the throne of God in the glory of their steadfast profession, it is done only on the ground of that steadfastness which they have manifested during the tribulations of time.

Ver. 1. *And I saw, and behold the Lamb stood upon the mount Zion, and with an hundred forty and four thousand, who had his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads.* The words, "and I saw and behold," indicate the *unexpected* nature of the lovely and consoling spectacle. Instead of *the* Lamb, Luther has incorrectly *a* Lamb. The preponderance of authorities is decidedly in favour of the article. It has respect to what had been said in the earlier part of the book as characteristic of the Lamb. In this passage, viewed by itself, it does not sufficiently appear why Christ should appear here in the form of a Lamb. The Lamb here is not the chief figure; the wonderful object is *the circle that surrounds him*, while, according to the calculations of human reason, he should have appeared there alone.—The tender Lamb forms a contrast to the savage *beast*. Though apparently so weak, he still knows how to endow his elect with invincible strength against the beast, together with a subservient and adhering world, so that these are unable to shake their fidelity. That this power is rooted in the blood of the Lamb is evident from ch. vii. 14, where the blessed, who stand in white robes before the throne of God, are represented as having washed their robes "in the blood of the Lamb;" and also from

ch. xii. 11, where it is said, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; ch. v. 9, xiii. 8. We are to regard the Lamb here also appearing as having been slain, as in ch. v.—The mount Zion, where the Lamb stands, is mentioned only here in the Revelation. But here, as in Hebr. xii. 22, it means the heavenly Zion (see ver. 18 in that ch. of Hebr., where this spiritual mountain is contrasted with that outward and earthly one, which formed the seat of the old covenant.) The heavenly Zion appears here as the local position of the heavenly temple, which stands related to the ancient tabernacle, "the tent of meeting," as the substance to the shadow; it is the place "where God and angels meet with men, and the righteous are eternally blessed." Since Christ, the brightness of the Father's glory, has his people assembled with him there, the word, "I dwell among them," receives its complete realization. Some would understand merely the mountain known on earth by the name of Zion. A rare contrast truly, this glorious scene and the poor earthly Zion! This had long ago lost its significance to the Seer of the Revelation; it had become in his view but a common profane place, a mount like other mounts (see vol. i. p. 415.) Besides, it is the usual manner of the author to employ Jewish things merely as the symbol of Christian (see vol. i. p. 424.) Jerusalem, in particular, never designates in the Apocalypse the city vulgarly known by that name. Further, as certainly as the *voice from heaven* in ver. 2 is the voice of the 144,000, so certainly must the mount Zion, where the Lamb stands with them, be the heavenly one. According to ver. 3 the throne of God is on mount Zion. But this does not belong to the earthly Zion, it belongs to the heavenly (comp. ch. iv. 2.) Finally, the comparison of ch. vii. 9—17, xv. 2—5, leaves no room to doubt that the 144,000 are presented to us in their state of heavenly bliss. But in such a state they have nothing to do with the earthly Zion. Ch. vii. 15 especially is to be compared, "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." The temple there is the heavenly one. So also here mount Zion can only be brought into notice as the site of the heavenly temple. Some older expositors suppose that substantially it is the true church on earth which is here represented to our view, although

they appear assembled in the heavenly sanctuary, of which even on earth they were members (Heb. xii. 22; Rev. xiii. 6); and that the subject of this section is the wonderful preservation of the church on earth (Vitringa: Res erat admiratione digna, dari ecclesiam veram in ecclesia falsa.) But the comparison of the parallel sections already referred to is against this view; and so also here are ver. 2 and 3, which admit of our thinking, not of a militant, but only of a triumphant church. The "new song" is sung by a chorus of conquerors.—The 144,000 are identical with those in ch. vii. 4; for this is undoubtedly the number which embraces all the true members of the Christian church. There they are placed before us in their earthly preservation; here, as in ch. vii. 9, ss., where also the 144,000 are the subject of discourse—for the multitude no one could number, as was shown there, is not different from them—in their heavenly bliss and glory. It might also have stood: *the* hundred and forty and four thousand. Yet this was not *necessary*, as it is more customary for the groups formally to preserve their independence, than that they should definitely refer back to the earlier portions. Comp. ch. xvii. 3, where *a* beast is the subject, although the same beast is meant which was already spoken of in ch. xiii.—Instead of "*his* name and the name of his Father," Luther has merely, "the name of his Father," in opposition to all the best copies, the nature of the thing, and the expression in ver. 4, "first-fruits to God and the Lamb." The omission can only have arisen from the negligence of some copyists.—If at ch. xiii. 16, 17, in regard to the mark, the name of the beast on the forehead as being the symbol of confession, it was rightly remarked, "he who bears on his forehead the mark of the beast, thereby declares himself before all the world to be a servant of the beast; the forehead is the most appropriate place for a confession:"—then, that the persons here spoken of should have the names of Christ and of his Father on their forehead, in a place where they were no longer exposed to temptation, can only indicate, that they had remained steadfast in their confession, even to the end. The design must simply be, to meet anxious doubts in regard to the possibility of maintaining a steadfast confession, which could not fail to arise in the bosom of believers, after having heard of the amazing power that was to be exercised by the beast

over men's minds; to meet the despair which, next to levity, is the most dangerous enemy to steadfastness in confession, but which was very natural in respect to an adversary who was to compel all, small and great, rich and poor, bond and free, to receive a mark on their right hand and on their foreheads. The name, therefore, is not written on their foreheads as a reward, but *it glitters there as the sacred insignia which they had triumphantly maintained amid all the assaults of the world, that plied every effort to rob them of it.* They did not first receive this glorious name in heaven, but they have maintained it on earth in sweat and blood, and therefore have gone with it to heaven, where He, whom they had faithfully confessed on earth, now confesses himself to them. Happy he who shall there be found in the number of those who have the name of the Lamb and of his Father written on their foreheads! and written in clear, broad, manifest, not faint, half-effaced characters! No one shall attain to this blessedness by his own power (ch. xix. 8.) Looking merely to this we must, with the disciples, be appalled, and exclaim, "Who then can be saved?" But here also the word of Jesus holds, "And Jesus looked on them and said to them, With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Ver. 2. *And I heard a voice from heaven, as a voice of many waters, and as a voice of great thunder; and the voice which I heard was as of harp-singers playing upon their harps.* Ver. 3. *And they sing a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders; and no one could learn the song, except the hundred forty and four thousand who have been redeemed from the earth.* The question that naturally arises first is, to whom does the voice belong? The answer is, beyond doubt, to the 144,000. For, any other can only be guessed at. The comparison of ch. xv. 2—4 leads to the elect in their heavenly perfection. The harps, according to ch. v. 8, belong to the church (see the remarks there.) The "new song" is in Scripture always represented as being sung by those to whom it relates (see on ch. iv. 9.) The expression "before the elders" is no objection to this view. For, why might not the multitude of believers be distinguished from their representatives? The elders belong to the necessary attendance around the throne.—The voice of those who have been redeemed from the earth (ver. 3), and

have now happily reached the place of their destination, sounds *from heaven*. That the voice is heard from heaven does not prevent, that he who heard it might be in heaven; although it may be right, that the real stand-point on the earth should here in some measure shine through the ideal one in heaven.—Several expositors would here divide between the voice like many waters and great thunder, and the voice of harpers. Such a division, indeed, has at first sight much in its favour. The first voice would then be the voice of God, frightening the enemies as with a mighty call: Thus far, but no farther; touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm; and giving to his people the promise of victory. The first voice, in that case, would only serve to give a present existence to what, at the time of this scene, was already past. It would place before our eyes God's powerful help, which he pledges to his people during the time of this hot conflict, that they may not be tempted above what they are able. The second voice would then be the product of the first. And it can be alleged in support of this view, that the voice "as the sound of great waters," in ch. i. 15, is the voice of Christ, with which he chides his enemies, and that also in the passages quoted there from the Old Testament the voice of the Lord is compared to that of many waters; that thunder in the Revelation usually has a polemical character, bearing respect to the dreadful judgments of God, threatened or accomplished; and that the same voice could scarcely be compared with thunder and with the soft notes of a harp. But this is all put to flight by the parallel passage, ch. xix. 6, "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia." From this it can no longer be doubted that here too the voice of the elect is compared with the voice of many waters and with the voice of thunder. The adjunct *mighty* or strong there, to which the *great* here corresponds, shews, that in the thunder the *sound* alone is taken into account, not, as commonly elsewhere, the *threatening* element belonging to it. This proceeds, according to the parallel passage, in which "as a voice from a great multitude" goes immediately before, from the vast assemblage of persons speaking, singing, playing. The comparison of the voice with many waters occurs in the Old Testament, not merely of the voice of the Lord, but also of the wings

of the Cherubim, the representatives of what is living on the earth (Ezek. i. 24), whose noise is there also compared to the voice of the Almighty, to thunder, and the noise of a host. The correct reading also, "And the voice which I heard was" (*ἡ φωνὴ ἣν ἤκουσα ὡς*), is against the division. It plainly indicates that the same voice is here described only under another aspect, and is meant to divert the mind from thinking of any second voice being intended here. If one will hold to a difference in the voices, then the preference must be arbitrarily given to the ill-supported reading: And I heard a voice (*φωνὴν ἤκουσα*).—That we are not to distinguish between the voice of many waters and the voice of great thunder—as, for example, referring the first to the multitude, the second to the frightfulness it possessed for the worshippers of the beast, or the first to the song, the second to the instrumental accompaniment,—is also quite evident from the parallel passages referred to, ch. xix. 6 and Ezek. i. 24. The louder the voice sounds, the more comforting is it; it addresses a more powerful call to remain steadfast in the midst of temptations. For so much the greater is the number of conquerors. Who should despair of reaching the glorious end which so many have actually reached! The strong voice is, at the same time, lovely; it is that of praise and thanksgiving, to which always in the Revelation the harps are appropriated, according to what is written in Ps. xliii. 4, "To thee, O God, will I give thanks on the harp, my God." They are called, not harp-players, but harp-singers, those who sing to the harp; hence, after "they play upon their harps," we should not make a point, but should connect thus: The harp-singers, who play upon their harps, and sing a new song.[1]—The subject of the new song must not be made a matter of conjecture; it is plainly to be understood from what precedes. The subject of it is not the work of redemption itself, but the harps have still the name of Christ and the name of his Father upon their foreheads, and that they stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, which they often despaired of attaining in

1 If this connection is recognised, it becomes more clear that the *ὡς*, which several even important critical helps have shoved in before *ὡδὴν* (Luther: and sang as a new song), is unsuitable, and must have been derived from the preceding context. Ch. xv. 3 and v. 9 are also against it. With the voice, too, of the harp-singers the *ὡς* would not have been found but from respect to the preceding *ὡς*.

seasons of darkness and trouble upon earth. Such a theme of praise, doubtless, has its root in the work of redemption; for it is owing simply to the blood of Christ that, notwithstanding all the rocks and tempests of life, they have reached in safety their heavenly home.—They sing the new song *before the throne and before the four beasts and before the elders.* The four beasts, as representing the earth or whatever lives on it (see on ch. vi. 1), could not fail to form part of the accompaniments of the throne, when the bloom of all earth's living creatures, out of whom the redeemed have come, celebrate their triumph. The elders always appear where a session is held in matters relating to the church.—The *learning* is from Deut. xxxi. 19, where it is said of the song of Moses, "teach it to the children of Israel;" comp. ver. 22, "and Moses taught it to the children of Israel." The song, which no one can learn except the 144,000, corresponds to the new name, which no one knows, saving he who receives it, in ch. ii. 17. In the promises to the churches in the seven epistles, the call, "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches," always indicates, that to understand them is a privilege belonging to the living members of the church. Even now on earth no one but the true believer can learn the songs of the church. For all others they are too high. What God has prepared for those who love him even here, and still more in heaven, is such that no eye has seen it, no ear has heard it, nor has it entered into the heart of man, (1 Cor. ii. 9.) How glorious must that be, which entirely transcends all ordinary powers of comprehension. How exuberant the joy of those, who are made blessed there with the name of Christ. The 144,000 are described as those *who have been redeemed from the earth.* The costly price is the blood of Christ (ch. v. 9), by virtue of which they have pressed through every thing that would have arrested their progress toward heaven. The expression, "from the earth," is explained by the "out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation" in ch. v., and here in ver. 4 by the "from among men."

Ver. 4. *These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins; these are they who follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goes; these have been redeemed from among men, first fruits to God and to the Lamb.* Ver. 5. *And in their mouth is found no lie, for they are without blame.* Along with

the name of God and Christ, or faithfulness in confessing him, their whole walk of purity in him has been set free from the temptations of this world. Those, who shine forth in the splendour of an unwavering profession, shine also in the splendour of a holy and virtuous life. A mighty call is this, to strive after such a life on earth with unwearied diligence, as it shows, that the labour is not in vain in the Lord! An urgent admonition to shun every, even the smallest stain of sin! And a solemn warning not to imagine that we can separate what is essentially united, that we can keep the name of Christ on our forehead, while in our walk we deny the power of his truth! The way and manner in which faith and works are here interwoven together, is peculiarly that of John. Faith in Jesus always has the keeping of the commandments of Jesus as its inseparable attendant.—The conquerors are first described as those, *who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins.* Sin does not confine itself in its consequences to the sphere of the Spirit. It presses deeply also into the bodily sphere. Its consequence is first death, then the whole host of sicknesses, of untoward and disagreeable circumstances, which are to be met with in the world. It even extends its sway to the irrational creation, where much exists now, that could not have originally belonged to it; much that plainly reflects the image of sin, much that is disagreeable, hateful, nauseous, impure. These fruits of sin in the visible creation are intended to make us sensible of sin itself. We should not shut our eye on them; we should lay to heart their complaining and accusing voice. Not to do this is the mark of a coarse, irreligious spirit; for example, to stand unmoved at the sight of a corpse, instead of beating on one's breast and exclaiming, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Now, the Mosaic law always aimed at bringing sin to remembrance; it gave utterance to these natural feelings, sought to awaken them in those, who still had no experience of them, and, at the same time, led such as had come to a deep sense of sin, to acquire also a sense of forgiveness through the appointed purifications and atonements, which, along with the conviction of sin, and on the ground of that conviction, is the privilege of the people of God. Of these legal arrangements, as to their substance, not one iota or title can fail—as sure as they have proceeded from God. What

is past in them refers merely to the form. The peculiarity as to form consisted only in this, that, agreeably to the symbolical spirit of antiquity, the feeling embodied itself in outward circumstances and acts, which had, however, their signification in their fitness to awaken or express the spiritual feeling. Thus, he, who touched a dead body, was thereby rendered impure, and must undergo a rite of purification; and no one was allowed to eat of a beast, which bore on it the image of sin. But the Mosaic law did not draw every thing of a corporeal nature, which has any relation to sin, into the circle of this representative system. Otherwise, it must, for example, have incorporated into it the wide range of diseases. It confined itself to the more salient points. The several classes of the legally impure are the following. 1. *Impurity arising from death.* Death is the wages of sin (Rom. vi. 23); the corporeally dead are the sad image of those, who are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. ii. 1; Col. ii. 13.) The rankest impurity is that of the *human corpse.* For, there death is directly the wages of sin, while, in other parts of the animal creation, it prevails only in consequence of man's sin. That outward defilement was taken into account only for its spiritual meaning; that it was not itself sinful, but only the image of sin, and should have called forth the sense of sin, was very clearly shown by the order appointed respecting defilements from the dead. It was a matter of duty to defile one's self for the dead; any one, that for the sake of avoiding the defilement, failed to do what was proper to his dead relatives, incurred a heavy guilt. 2. *The impurity of the leprosy.* This disease renders a man, even while living in the body, a foul and disgusting object. That such a condition should befal a man, plainly indicated how it had stood with him. Hence, the leprosy, which is to be regarded as at the head of all diseases, was specially set apart in the law as the symbol of sin. Any one smitten by the leprosy, must be removed from all intercourse with the pure, and in tattered clothes, with bare head, with a covered chin, was to go about as a personified Sin, and walking Repentance, crying aloud, Unclean, Unclean! See Lev. xiii. 45, 46, on which it is to be remarked, that such a mournful lot befel not a pure and holy person, but only a sinner, and that the person suffering it represented not another's but primarily his own sin. 3. *The impurity of corporeal issues*—as, for example, gonorrhea,

bloody issues, etc. That the point of view in circumstances of this kind—which still ought to produce a feeling of humiliation in those, who either experience them, or are brought into contact with them—is entirely that of the impure and unclean, on account of which they were employed as an image of sin, as they are themselves the consequence of sin, is evident from the passages Ezek. xxxvi. 17; Isa. lxiv. 5; Lam. i. 17, where sin is represented under the image of these impurities. Indeed the flowing out from the flesh itself, the impure flowing, is always represented as the occasion of impurity; see, for example, Lev. xv. 30. 4. *The impurity of beasts.* The following passages refer to impurity of this kind, Prov. xi. 22; Matth. vii. 6, "Cast not your pearls before swine," 2 Pet. ii. 22, "The dog has returned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." Every human evil has its image in the animal creation, and when beholding that, man should turn his eye back upon himself.—Now, to the third of the above classes of legal impurities belongs also sexual intercourse, both in the married and the unmarried, which, in the respect here contemplated, are not distinguished from each other. The legal view of the matter is made quite plain in Lev. xv. 18. "Come not at your wives," said Moses, in Ex. xix. 15, when he called upon the people to prepare for the manifestation of the Lord. The high priest said to David, on his asking for bread, "There is no common bread under my hand, but there is hallowed bread, if the young men have kept themselves at least from women." (1 Sam. xxi. 4.) The appointment in Lev. xxiv. 9, that the hallowed bread should be eaten only by the servants of the sanctuary, he feels at liberty to set aside, on the ground that necessity admitted of exceptions to the rule, but he considered the existence of legal purity as an indispensable condition. Of Bathsheba also it is said in 2 Sam. xi. 4, after her adultery with David, "and she sanctified herself from her impurity." Now, this legal impurity appears here, by an interpretation of the ancient symbolism, as a figurative description of sinful defilement. There might also have been chosen others of the same class. Sexual intercourse was peculiarly fitted for the end in view only in so far as the relation of the man to the woman presents an image of man's relation to sin. Even in the Old Testament sin is sometimes represented by the woman. Comp. Gen.

iv. 7, "And if thou art not good, sin lies before the door, and its desire is toward thee, and thou shalt rule over it," with ch. iii. 16, "And thy desire is toward thy husband, and he shall rule over thee:" as much as, thou must in respect to sin be the man, and it the woman. The woman, who sits in the middle of the Ephah, in Zech. v. 7, is wickedness, as explained in ver. 8. Job's wife is a symbolical figure: she represents weak flesh in contrast to the willing spirit. In this book itself, by the wife of the angel is denoted, in ch. ii. 20, that portion of the governing body which had been carried away by the false teaching. The starting-point for the representation given here of the relation of man to sin under the image of man's relation to woman, is first, that sin came through the female sex. Another point of comparison is indicated in Gen. iv. 7, namely, that man should rule over sin, as the man over the woman. Then, it is also to be taken into account, that by means of the primeval history this figurative representation was quite natural; comp. 1 Tim. ii. 14, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and brought in transgression;" Sirach xxv. 24, "Of the woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die;" and 1 Pet. iii. 7, which states what is connected with this, that the woman is the weaker vessel. From what has been said, it is evident that the passage before us substantially agrees with 2 Cor. viii. 1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." The 144,000 are those, who have responded to this exhortation of the apostle. We may also compare 2 Cor. xi. 2, where, as here, the virgin-state is represented as consisting in freedom from sin.—Other expositions betray their untenableness at the very first look. We are not to think of "freedom from incontinence and fornication, which in the Apostle's view stands connected with the service of idolatry." The expression, "They are virgins," decides against this; and it also excludes the intercourse of married life.[1] Nothing but helpless embarrassment could dispose people to fall on such an entirely groundless explanation, and to revive it after its untenableness has long ago been demonstrated. If one will not

[1] Jerome even in his day took the right view: Ne putaremus illud: non inquinati sunt mulieribus, de iis dici, qui scorta non norunt, statim intulit, virgines enim sunt; per non inquinatos igitur intelligit non uxoratos, per virgines caelibes innuptas.

decide for the figurative interpretation, there remains only the alternative, that sexual intercourse generally, even that of married life, is here unconditionally condemned. For even the refuge is cut off, of supposing that the state of virginity is contemplated as being the highest stage of human perfection: the discourse here is not of some more select persons, but *all the* 144,000 *are such as have not defiled themselves with women, the whole Christian church consists only of virgins.* The rejection of marriage, however, is so decidedly against the spirit and letter of holy scripture (see 1 Tim. iv. 1, ss., where those who prohibit marriage, are represented as apostates from the faith, and teachers of the doctrines of devils; 1 Cor. vii.; Heb. xiii. 4), and against the example of the apostles themselves, that no person of sound understanding can imagine such a thing to be taught here. Could John possibly have wished to exclude Peter from the heavenly kingdom? Even the Catholic expositors, with all their disposition to obtain recommendations of celibacy, find themselves obliged to resort here to the figurative meaning, though they have not understood properly how to handle and establish it. Bossuet, for example, remarks, "These are pure and courageous persons, who have not shared in the common weaknesses of men." He would also find, in addition, a secret allusion to the privileges of celibates, but only because he had not made, or did not wish to make clear the obviously enough existing alternative—*either, or.* If the literal interpretation is adopted, celibacy must be taken as the mark of all true Christians; if the figurative is preferred, then nothing whatever is said of celibacy in the ordinary sense.—The 144,000 are further described as those, *who follow the Lamb wherever he goes.* This is a second mark of a state of grace. According to the concurring reports of all the Evangelists, Christ often spake during his sojourn on earth of his *followers*, and usually, indeed, with a respect to the sufferings therewith connected. See, for example, Matt. x. 38, "And whosoever does not take up his cross and follow me, he is not worthy of me;" Mark viii. 34. Special reference, it would seem, is made here to Luke ix. 57, "And it came to pass, that as he went in the way, a certain man said to him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." That the going there was of a difficult nature, is evident from

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the reply our Lord gave to him. The whole section of Luke ix. 57—62 serves as a commentary, since it shows, what the following of Christ draws along with it, what earnestness is required for it, how many say in a light spirit, "I will follow thee," how one must renounce everything in order to follow him in truth. Vitringa, therefore, remarks with perfect propriety, "If the Lamb goes to mount Calvary bearing his cross, we must also go with him bearing his cross, Heb. xiii. 13." Those, who understand the following of the Lamb here in the sense of reward (Züllig: "They must follow the Lamb, and shall consequently be guided and protected by him, as a flock by their shepherd"), have, besides the fundamental passages in the Gospels, the connection here also against them. It is the following of the Lamb as a matter of duty that alone is meant here—although this, certainly, has following him as a reward for its corresponding recompense. Such as have followed the Lamb here, wherever he goes, are those whom the Lamb shall there feed, and lead to living fountains of waters, ch. vii. 17. —"These, these, these are they, occurs thrice in the one verse. Such are the characters of those who belong to the true church, and are members of Christ" (Berleb. Bible.)—The *third* mark is, that they have been *redeemed from among men to be first-fruits to God and to the Lamb.* That the first-fruits were considered by themselves, and apart from their consecration as the *best*, as Bähr supposes, (Symbolik vol. ii., p. 47), is destitute of all solid proof. Num. xviii. 12 refers only to a *part* of the first fruits, such as were taken from an entire mass, and where one was obliged to take the best. The first-fruits of a tree, for example, are not the best, Lev. xix. 23, 24. Neither is the first sheaf, Lev. xxiii. 10. Here, at least, what is taken into account is simply and exclusively the consecration, the holiness, by means of which the first-fruits were separated from the whole mass of the increase. The holy, as contrasted with the common, to which the rest of mankind corresponds,—this is the point of comparison between the first-fruits and Christians—the reason why Christians are here described as spiritual first-fruits. Respect is had, as appears from the connection, to the preservation of this holiness through the whole walk; so that we may regard as exactly parallel in meaning the words in Titus ii. 14, "Who has given himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto

himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." The first-fruits are mentioned precisely as here in Jas. i. 18, "Of his own will begat he us, through the word of truth, that we might be first-fruits of his creatures," where the central thought is, that those who have been begotten again in the kingdom of God are to be viewed as standing at the head of humanity. The "first-fruits" are parallel to the "perfect and entire" in ver. 7. In James also the spiritual characteristics are especially taken into account, through which their pre-eminent place is maintained. Such expositions as that of Grotius, "They are called first-fruits with respect to those who shall come *after* them," and of Züllig, "To other pious persons still dwelling on the earth the prospect is unfolded in this word that they, too, can enter, along with these first-fruits, into this state of blessedness," are sufficiently disposed of by the single remark, that the 144,000 represent the *whole church;* so that no *followers* of these first-fruits can be contemplated. It also serves for a refutation of this wrong way of presenting the point of comparison, that in the parallel passage in James the subject of discourse is first-fruits, not of Christians or of men generally, but of *creatures;* so that there, too, no respect can be had to a *following*.—In ver. 5 it is given as a characteristic trait of believers, as a part of the glorious inheritance which they have happily carried along with them into heaven, *that in their mouth is found no lie.*[1] As John in particular makes frequent mention of the *truth* (see on ch. iii. 7), he declares himself also most frequently in the strongest terms against *lying* (Bengel: "The word ψεῦδος, with its derivatives and compounds, occurs very frequently in the writings of John.") Comp. ch. xxi. 8, 27, xxii. 15. Freedom from lying appears not rarely as the mark of the elect in the writings of the Old Testament: "The remnant of Israel shall do no iniquity, nor speak lies, and in their mouth shall be found no deceitful tongue." But there is a peculiar depth in John's idea of the truth, and so its sweep is with him very wide, and to be destitute of it is something very great. A liar, in his account, according to 1 John ii. 4, is one who does not confess Christ, nor exhibits his faith in his works. He notes

1 Luther has: and in their mouth is found nothing *false*. He follows the ill-supported reading: δόλος, which has come from a comparison of 1 Pet. ii. 22.

it as the crowning point of lying, in 1 John ii. 22, to deny Christ, with which idolatry and the deification of men, described as a work of lies in Rom. i. 25, goes hand in hand. What is here ascribed to the honour of Christians, they owe, according to 1 John ii. 27, to the anointing, to the Holy Spirit; it is a privilege of the Christian, of the anointed, as generally not to sin (1 John iii. 9), so in particular not to lie. All men are by nature liars, and freedom from lying, especially from that worst form of it, which withholds divine honour from him to whom alone it is due, and ascribes it to one to whom it does not belong, can be derived only from above; the rather so, as man's natural inclination to lying has so powerful a coadjutor in Satan, the father of lies (John viii. 44.) Allusion is made to 1 Pet. ii. 22, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (Berleb. Bible, "After the example of their master, of whom the same words are used in 1 Pet. ii. 22.") The allusion is especially seen in the expression "was found," which does not occur in the original passage, Isa. liii. 9, and leaves little room to doubt, that John had the passage of Peter in his eye. The other expression also, "for they are without blame," has its exemplar in what is written of Christ in 1 Pet. i. 19.—The words, "before the throne of God," which Luther retained, are too slenderly supported to find a sufficient justification in the appeal to Jude, ver. 24. They have probably been introduced into the text by combining together that passage in Jude and ver. 3 here.

THE SECTION CH. XIV. 6—13.

In vers. 1—5, believers are invigorated by having their eye directed to the noble company of those who have carried their confession with them, pure and undefiled, to that place where they are no longer exposed to any trial and temptation. *Here* the sting is taken out of the temptations by pointing to the judgment, which threatens the world that plies the temptations, which in particular will bring to desolation the seemingly omnipotent Babylon; by pointing to the frightful temporal, but more especially the eternal punishments, which await the worshippers of the beast, who, for the sake of the world's favour, would deny him who will soon come to execute judgment on the world! Who

would allow himself to be deceived by the mere *appearance* of power, that he may soon, when the real Omnipotence comes forth from its concealment, be involved with it in the punishment which is suspended over the apostate! Who, in order to escape the tribulation which is light and temporal, would have his portion appointed in the *eternal lake of fire!* These truths are announced by a threefold angelic message, ver. 6—11. In ver. 12, the admonition is raised from it to continue steadfast in the faith; and ver. 13 sets over against the doleful fate of the worshippers of the beast, the glorious destiny of those who have maintained to the end their fidelity to the Lamb.

Ver. 6. *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, who had an everlasting gospel, to proclaim a joyful message to those who sit on the earth, and over every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people.* Ver. 7. *And said with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him, who made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.* John sees *another* angel. As no angel had been mentioned in the verses immediately preceding, in respect to whom a distinction might be drawn, as in ch. vii. 2, viii. 3, and also in ch. x. 1, where it is pretty natural to think of the angels with the seven trumpets, within whose circuit that angelic appearance might still be regarded as coming; so here we are either to think of those earlier appearances of angels generally—another angel, one that had not yet been mentioned (ch. xv. 1)—or the angel is named another to distinguish this from the angel, who stood constantly beside John, while he was in the spirit (see on ch. i. 1); or both are to be combined. The angel, who stood beside John, renders the thought of a comparison with all the other angels that had hitherto appeared, in itself otherwise somewhat remote, not out of the way. The omission of the *other* (retaining *an*), which is found also in Luther, has manifestly arisen from the difficulty of explaining it. *Another*, besides, denotes not so properly a diversity of *person*, as of *mission;* as indeed the name itself of angels does not express their nature, but refers to their mission. It was customary among the older Protestant expositors to make the three angels point to human personages. The reference of this first angel, in particular, with

the everlasting gospel to Luther, well-nigh became the *church* exposition. "Michael Stifel gave utterance to it so early as the year 1522, then Bugenhagen in 1546, beside Luther's corpse, and since then many others have made the application to Luther." The mere name of angel certainly is not enough to set aside the reference to an important character in the church. For, the name of the heavenly servants of God is in other places transferred to those on earth (comp. on ch. i. 20.) But the "flying in the midst of heaven" is quite decisive—comp. on ch. viii. 13. This suits only a real angel. And that such an one might be employed here only as a form for representing some human personage, we shall be the less inclined to admit, if we take a survey of the whole angelic appearances mentioned in this book, in which, notwithstanding the great space that is occupied by the angels, there is nothing elsewhere that would justify us in putting the sense contended for on what is said here. Bengel himself is forced to remark, "In all other parts of the Revelation the word angel is used in its proper meaning; in regard to the angels of the churches the case is quite different." At least, this interpretation must be regarded as of like origin with modern ones of the *wonderful kind*, so long as no urgent necessity can be shewn to exist for it; so long as it cannot be proved, that angelic appearances are here spoken of in the proper sense. This has, certainly, been attempted. Vitringa, for example, says, "This angel not merely *shews* the gospel to the nations of the world, but he also *teaches* it to them; the church, however, has not angels but men for the proclamation of the gospel." But in this it is forgotten, that we are here on the territory of *vision*, which cannot be measured by the rule of existing realities. The simple idea is the nearness of the judgment on those from whom the church had to suffer. This idea assumes, as it were, flesh and blood in the appearance of the angel with the everlasting gospel, that the conflict with visible evils might be taken up in a more vigorous and effective manner.—The angel has an *everlasting gospel*. What the subject was of the everlasting gospel, we learn from ver. 7, where it is communicated. Accordingly, we cannot, with many of the older expositors, think of what is commonly known by the name of the gospel—"the doctrine of the true ground of righteousness for sinful men before God,"—which

is also opposed by the consideration that it is not *the*, but *a* gospel, that is spoken of, a joyful message, but a message only in respect to the judgments that were approaching. This message is a joyful one, first of all, for the believers, whom it immediately concerns. "When a king," says Bengel, "draws near with a warlike host, it is a source of terror to rebels and enemies, but of joy for loyal subjects." By means of the judgment the true servants of Christ are delivered, and by it also the cause is made to shine forth in the clearest light, to which they have devoted their lives; the confident expectation of the judgment is the shield, which they present against all doubts and anxieties. But for the world also, the message, in a certain respect, carries the character of joyful tidings. Time is still given it to repent, and to that it is now expressly called. A salutary message it always is, which warns us of our heavy guilt and punishment. The word, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," is always a gospel which can only be changed through men's own guilt into a message of terror.—The gospel is described as an *everlasting* one. Here alone is the epithet everlasting applied to the gospel. We have a commentary in Matth. xxiv. 35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." All men's words are breathed forth and expire in time. Often something intervenes, they fall to the ground and decay. But God's word, his threatenings and his promises, are eternal and unchangeable, even as he himself is eternal and unchangeable, and because he is so. At the very time when they appear to have become impotent, they pass into the most glorious, the most terrible fulfilment. "When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh on them, as travail upon a woman with child." Woe to him who has a word of God against him! That the word will take effect against him in its time, is as certain as if it had already done so. Berleb. Bible: "This word has His eternal impress, and hence is named eternal; it must live *throughout*."—We still need to determine more exactly in what respect the angel has the everlasting gospel; as some may possibly conceive, with several of the older expositors, that he had it in the form of a book in his hand (comp. ch. x. 2.) But if this had been the case, to say nothing of what follows, it would have been more plainly indicated; and the gospel being described as ever-

lasting, is also against it, as such an epithet does not properly suit a book. The proper determination of the matter may be gathered from the words: to proclaim the joyful message, etc. Hence he had the gospel as an evangelist, as a preacher of the joyful message.[1]—As those to whom the joyful message was to be proclaimed are first named, "those who sit upon the earth" (Luther falsely: those who sit and dwell on the earth), comp. at ch. xiii. 7; Luke xxv. 35. Then it is to be proclaimed *over* every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people.[2] The angel's proclamation over every nation, etc., forms the counterpoise to the power of the beast *over* every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation in ch. xiii. 7. Perhaps there is a design in beginning here with the same word, with which there the enumeration is closed, as also in ch. v. 13 the same word intentionally stands at the beginning of the whole enumeration, which in ver. 12 was placed at the end. The *over* is not to be taken altogether *locally;* but it denotes at the same time the *authority.* The local relation of the angel to those whom the message respects, images at the same time the real relation. The reference to ch. xiii. 7 was perceived even by the older expositors. Bengel: "The power of the beast stretches over all tribes, and people, and tongues, and nations, ch. xiii. 7, and where the beast extends, there also does the angel." In like manner as in ch. xiii. 7, under the nations, etc., here also Christians are comprehended, for whom the message more especially, though from what has been remarked, not exclusively, bears a joyful character.—The message of the angel begins with the words, "Fear God, and give glory to him." The fear of God forms the contrast to the

1 A comma is indeed to be placed after ἔχοντα, but, for the reason stated in the text, the εὐαγγελίσαι stands in a close relation to it. We might even immediately connect together εὐαγγέλιον εὐαγγελίσαι, comp. Gal. i. 11, 1 Cor. xv. 2. But we should in that case have a long trailing sentence.

2 The original text is, εὐαγγελίσαι τοὺς καθημένους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπί. Copyists did not understand the double construction, as De Wette still, in justification of the text adopted by him, ἐπὶ τοὺς καθημένους, remarks, "as is required to make it uniform with the following part of the text." Several shove in an ἐπὶ also before καθημένους, and others delete it before πᾶν ἔθνος (so Luther.) The ἐπί, which cannot signify *on*, and which, from the parallel passage alone, ch. xiii. 7, must be taken in the sense of *over*, is explained by the position of the angel in the highest heaven. So also, in regard to an announcement coming down from above, הגיד is first used with the accusative, and then with על in Job xxxvi. 33: He gives (through the storm) report of himself to his friend (man), to the cattle also, and *over* plants.

fear of the beast and his idols. When the hour of judgment comes, evil will alight on those "who have worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." The words, "give glory to him," are taken from Ps. xcvi. 7, where the call is addressed, as here, to the tribes of the heathen world. The call is followed by the reason, "for the time of his judgment is come"—the time, when he will surely visit all who do not fear and honour him; when all must be restored that they have unrighteously taken away; when the great truth shall be verified, that God glorifies himself *on* all who would not voluntarily glorify him. Who, then, would fall away to those against whom God's avenging sword is already prepared? Who would be afraid of those who have themselves to be most horribly afraid? Who ought to be imposed upon by the stately pomp of a tree which has the axe already laid at its root?—The expression, "it is come," is used by way of anticipation, see on ch. xi. 18. The exhortation to repent implies, that there was still to be a time, that the judgment had not yet actually entered; although the absolute certainty of its coming rendered it as good as present. The *judgment* here is the collected force of all the judicial actions, by which onwards to the end of time God is to break in pieces the ungodly world. Babylon, or heathen Rome, is only in the first instance the object of the judgment; much as in ch. xiii. the beast is substantially to revive again in Gog and Magog. This word: The hour of his judgment is come, flames up anew, as often as the godless apostacy renews itself. It therefore concerns *us* also, and we ought to hear a solemn admonition in the call to fear God and give him the glory. For the *last* time the declaration, "the hour of his judgment is come," shall pass into fulfilment, when the hour for the dead to be judged is come—see ch. xi. 18. But what is written in ver. 8, decides against our referring it to the last judgment alone. The call to worship him, who made heaven, &c., presents us with the characteristic mark of those on whom the judgment is to fall. *It is to operate beyond the sphere of the apostles' creed.* "Through the great work of creation," says Bengel, "the true living God is distinguished from false gods. Hence Jeremiah, before the Israelites had gone to Babylon and learned to think as the Chaldeans, puts into their mouth this testimony to the truth, Jer. x. 11, where also, in ver. 2—7, strong declarations are found respecting the fear that should be cherished, not toward

idols, but toward God." The contrast in Jeremiah is formed by "the gods, who have not made the heaven and the earth." We may also compare Acts xiv. 15, "We preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities to the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." Along with the positive call here to the world-deifying heathenism, which is springing into new life in the present day, and which, with the first article, must deny the two others also, there goes also the negative: "Repent of the works of your hands, that ye may *not* worship the gods of gold and silver, and stone," &c. (ch. ix. 20), and, above all, not men, of whom all other idols are but the reflection and transparent veil. Those, who understand by the beast the Papacy, are thrown into great perplexity by these words. The confession respecting God as the maker of heaven and earth, has never been abandoned in the Papacy; for it has always held by the apostles' creed. The description of the objects of God's creative energy completes itself in the number four, as the common signature of the world. The same number is found in the passage referred to in the Acts. The mention of the *fountains of water* appears strange at first sight. The great importance of natural well-springs (see Ps. civ. 10—17) scarcely suffices for an explanation of this. In ch. viii. 10, springs of water denote the wells of *salvation*, and they likewise occur figuratively in ch. xvi. 4. There is a respect also here to this figurative signification, as also under the sea we are to couple with what is literally indicated by that name, the sea of the nations—comp. ch. viii. 8, 9. The call to worship God as the maker of heaven and earth, &c., contains also a fearful threatening. He, who made the heaven, can, and also will extinguish its lights for those who are faithless and unthankful, ch. viii. 12; He, who made the earth, can and must and will also by fire and hail desolate and consume it, ch. viii. 7; He, who made the sea, will change the sea into blood, ch. viii. 8, 9; He, who made the fountains of water, will turn them into wormwood, ch. viii. 10, 11, comp. xvi. 1—9. The Creator of heaven and of earth is the great and terrible God, who *can* arm every thing against his despisers, and also must do it; as it is contrary to his nature to give his glory to another, and to be satisfied with anything that men are pleased to present to him.

Ver. 8. *And there followed another angel, a second, who*

said, She is fallen, she is fallen, Babylon the great, which made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. In the preceding verse the judgment generally was announced, upon all the beast's forms of manifestation, from those that existed in the prophet's time, till the resuscitation of the beast in Gog and Magog; here, on the other hand, what is specially set forth is the judgment on that particular phase of the power of the beast, by which the members of the church were then harassed and tempted to apostacy. If we were to understand here by Babylon the ungodly power of the world in general, the messages of the two angels would not be properly distinct from each other. But as Babylon here is brought into view only as an individual phase of the anti-christian power, what is said more immediately of it, undoubtedly holds good in substance of the other phases that are to follow. The *second* (δεύτερος) was left out by several critical helps, which Luther follows, merely because it was regarded as superfluous after *another*. This, however, is by no means the case; it indicates, as does also the *following* (not *coming*), that the angels, although different, still were connected together, and that their messages bore respect to each other. "With a loud voice, it is said in regard to the first and third angel, but not in regard to the second." That the expression should be wanting here is certainly not accidental. As the announcement in this case stands related to the preceding one, only as the particular to the general, the loud voice here was not necessary; the message of the first angel was still, in a manner, sounding in the ear. In the message of the third angel, when a rise is made from the particular back to the general, it appears again. That Rome is to be understood by Babylon, is almost universally agreed, and admits, indeed, of no doubt. But that we are to think only of heathen Rome, and not, with the older Protestant expositors, of Christian Rome, is abundantly plain from ch. xviii. 20, alone, where we are told, that God avenges on Babylon his apostles and prophets. It was heathen Rome alone that had to do with the apostles, who were, at the same time, prophets (see vol. i. p. 41.) It slew Peter and Paul, and sent John into banishment. The same thing is clear also by comparing the fundamental passage, 1 Pet. v. 13. The connection, too, leads in this direction. That the heathen worldly

power is the object of the judgment announced by the first angel we have already seen. But the message of the second angel stands related to that of the first, as the particular to the general. Then, Babylon is only a particular aspect, under which the beast manifests itself, and the beast cannot possibly be the Papacy. Finally, the addition, "which made all nations drunk with the wine of the wrath of her fornication," does not suit papal Rome; and those, who have adopted this interpretation, have found themselves driven to a forced explanation of these words. It is the case, not rarely, in the Old Testament, that the worldly powers of the *present* and the *future* are described under the names of those of the *past*. Zechariah, for example, after the return from the Babylonish exile, designates the place destined for the reception of the Jews, when the measure of their sins should have again become full, and they should once more be expelled from their land, by the name of the land of their former exile; in ch. x. 11, he speaks of their future oppressors under the name of Assyria and Egypt (see the Christology there, where other examples are produced.) This transference of names carries with it a strong emphasis. It makes the whole of God's earlier procedure start forth to life again. The word of God, which has once already passed into fulfilment, cannot now be treated as a vain imagination. In the New Testament the name of Babylon was first applied to heathen Rome in 1 Pet. v. 13, "the co-elect in Babylon greets you, and Marcus my son." It is inexplicable, that persons should still always insist upon Babylon being taken here in the *literal* sense. What difficulties they thus involve themselves in, need not be stated at length. The only reason which has been urged for it of any weight, is disposed of by the remark, that the epistles of the New Testament are not entirely written in common prose, and that the poetical character of a large portion of the sacred books, necessarily exercised an influence on the rest. The co-elect is the associated church, according to ch. i. 1, ii. 9; 2 John v. 13;—the co-elect in Babylon can only be such an one as had there a settled abode —not a person who happened to be there by accident. Marcus is the *spiritual* son of Peter; how, in such a connection, could Babylon be the literal Babylon? The contents of the epistle, also, are in perfect accordance with this view. It was written

when Rome had just begun to tread in the footsteps of Babylon. The designation of Rome as Babylon corresponds to the passage, "Be vigilant, and sober, for your adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." Comp. Jer. li. 38. Here we have the first rise of the designation. The word, written in the true prophetical spirit, gave much cause for reflection. As the Nicolaitans in John point to the second epistle of Peter (2 Pet. ii. 15), so does Babylon to the first; nor are there wanting in the Apocalypse other references to the same epistle (see vol. i. p. 78.) Among the Jews also Rome went by the name of Babylon.[1] Whether this was done before the time of Peter and John, we can allow to remain undecided. The probability certainly is, that it was. But for Christians, at any rate, Rome first became Babylon, when it entered on the persecution of the true people of God. Not what it inflicted on the mere fleshly Israel; but only what it inflicted on the *true*, could have justified its being called by that name. In this first did the spirit fully display itself, which had impelled it during its earlier career. If, in the case of the beast, the blasphemy against the name of God and his tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven, is essentially the war against the saints (ch. xiii. 6, 7), the same also must hold in respect to Babylon. In ch. xviii. 20, it is represented as the chief feature in Babylon's guilt, what she had done against the apostles and prophets. The other only became manifest in this. Also, in the Old Testament, whatever the great monarchies of the world might do in regard to merely worldly kingdoms, it was only when the same came to be practised against the Lord's people, that it appeared as the occasion of divine judgment; see, for example, Hab. ii.—"As often as a delineation is given of Babylon in this book, it has the epithet of the great city, or simply the great, which still conveys an idea of magnificence." (*Here* it is called merely the great; the "city," which Luther retains, is wanting in the best manuscripts, and to be deleted.) The designation is taken from Dan. iv. 27, where Nebuchadnezzar speaks of Babylon the great. But the permanence of the designation, as if it formed a component part of the proper name, cannot but appear somewhat strange. It is

1 Buxtorf Lex. p. 2230, Schöttgen Horae, vol. i. p. 1125.

to be explained from an allusion to the name Rome, *strength*, which still plainly discovers itself in ch. xviii. 2. That it is not called the strong, but the great, was on account of the fundamental passage of Daniel.—Babylon the great, *is fallen*. Allusion is made to Isa. xxi. 9, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon." Comp. Jer. l. 2, li. 8. The fundamental passage shews, that the omission of one of the expressions, "it is fallen," in some copies, has arisen from negligence. In that passage also, the preterite is a prophetical one, denoting the certainty of the overthrow, which had already as good as taken place. With an intentional repetition it is again said in ch. xviii. 2, 3, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon —because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." The preterite there is an actually historical one: what is predicted here, is represented there as fulfilled, as also in ch. xvi. 19, it is the actual overthrow of Babylon that is treated of. In the description of the fulfilment the words of the prophecy are again repeated, only some further enlargement is given to them.—Babylon, the great, has *made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*.[1] The *wine of the wrath* is the wine, which consists of wrath. As wine makes the drinkers helpless, so does her wrath the nations. The making the nations drunk with wine is a very common image in the Old Testament. The point of comparison is always the impotence, the helplessness, misery, degradation, shamefulness of the condition (see my Comm. on Ps. lx. 5.) In Hab. ii. 15, 16, it is said of the king of Babylon: "Woe to thee, who dost give thy neighbour drink, pouring out thy wrath, and makest him drink that thou mayest see their nakedness. Thou shalt be filled with shame for glory. Drink thou also, and be uncovered, and let shame come upon thy glory." The sense of ver. 15 is: Woe to him, who in his wrath makes his neighbour impotent, in order to take advantage of his humiliation. The wrath is the wine—comp. Jer. xxv. 15. This figure is likewise applied to Babylon

1 The original reading is: which, ἥ, has made drunk. The ἥ, on account of the cacophony, an η immediately preceding, and on account of ch. xviii. 13, was by many copyists changed into ὅτι. Others have nothing, either to avoid the cacophony, or because on account of the first η they overlooked the second, or, perhaps, because they were perplexed by the vacillating of the MSS. between ἥ and ὅτι. This is the worst reading. The asyndeton is harsh and without any occasion, and against ch. xviii. 3. The ὅτι there is related to the ἥ here, as πέπωκε to πεπότικε. Scripture delights in such intentional repetitions to introduce some unimportant alterations.

in Jer. li. 7, "The golden cup of Babylon is in the hand of the Lord (to be now presented to herself, according to ch. xxv. 26, while hitherto in executing the Lord's commission she had presented it to others), that makes all the world drunk; the nations have drunk of her wine; therefore have the nations become mad." Comp. also Nah. iii. 11, where it is said of Nineveh, "Thou also shalt be drunken, be hid" (the latter expression gives the meaning of the figure; accordingly the drunkenness denotes the impotence, the total degradation, the utter vanishing); and Obad. ver. 16, "And all the heathen drink continually, and they drink and swallow down, and they are *as if they were not.*"—The wine of the wrath of which Babylon has made the heathen to drink, is more particularly described as that of her *fornication.* By the image of fornication is denoted in some passages of the Old Testament the selfishness, that under the veil of love disguises itself, and in this form seeks the gratification of its own lust. In Isa. xxiii. 15, ss. Tyrus is named a whore on account of its commercial alliances, and its commercial gain is represented as the hire of a whore.[1] The point of comparison is the making one's self agreeable, feigning love for the sake of gain. In Nah. iii. 4, the term fornication is employed to denote the diplomatic arts of the Assyrian power, by which she insinuated herself upon the nations, in order to ensnare and destroy them under the semblance of love. Among conquering nations there always goes along with their rough power a hypocritical love and friendship, by which they endeavour to wheedle the nations and make them subservient to their purposes. What is described as fornication in Nah. iii. 4—"Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts"—is in ver. 1 described as deceit. The point of comparison is quite the same in Nahum as in Isaiah, viz., selfishness concealing itself behind the appearance of love. The difference simply is, that the gain sought for is there represented as gain of merchandise, here of countries. In the same way we are to explain here, "her fornication." It is added to give additional strength and elevation to the meaning. Without it we might

1 The words: She whores with all the kings of the earth, is rendered by the LXX.: *καὶ ἔσται ἐμπόριον πάσαις ταῖς βασιλείαις τῆς οἰκουμένης.*

have thought merely of rude force, which here is relatively the least of the bad qualities. It is as much as, "Her wrath has made the nations poor, and that (not merely by means of rude force, but also) under the fair covering of love, inveigling her neighbours to their greater destruction, whom she was bound in truth to protect, by means of an artful and cunning diplomacy." The terrible character of this fornication of Rome, John had probably learned from his own experience. It shewed itself also in the treatment of Christians. In the history of her persecutions we are not so much shocked at their ferocity as at the *cunning*, by which under the semblance of love it was tried to seduce Christians into apostacy to the faith.—The common supposition is, that the giving to drink of the wine of her fornication, means seduction to the service of idolatry. So Bengel: "This fornication is also mentioned in ch. xvii. 2, 4, xviii. 3, 9, xix. 2; and hence Babylon herself is called the whore, the great whore, the mother of harlots, ch. xvii. Such fornication is properly the false worship of God, even with a Christian name and appearance; and it is compared to wine, on account of its pleasantness and its power to make drunk." But this interpretation makes shipwreck on the circumstance, that the subject is the wine of the *wrath*, or the wrath-wine of her fornication. It is impossible to shew, in regard to fornication of *that* sort, how it proceeds from the principle of wrath. The different ways, in which commentators have tried to meet this argument, only shew how invincible it is. Several, with Bengel at their head, cut the knot, and declare the expression, "of the wrath," to be spurious. The omission of it, however, in some manuscripts, which Luther has followed, can lend them no support; it merely shews, that there were already scribes, who did not know what to make of it. Others have tried to help themselves by an explanation. Most have gone in with the assertion, that wrath stands here for glow or for poison; the wrath-wine denotes drink that is heating, burning, that is, filling or poisoning the mind with zeal for idols. But this interpretation is contrary to the ascertained signification of θυμός, wrath,[1] and especially against the constant use of it in the Apocalypse; more particularly against ver. 10, where the

1 Bengel already remarked: Supersedemus labore illo, quo nonulli vocabulo θυμός significationem *aestus* conficere conantur.

wrath of God refers back to the wrath of Babylon here. Others, still again, abide by the signification of wrath, but the wrath must not be that of Babylon, it must belong to the drunkards: the wine, which turns into wrath. But the wine must here, as in ver. 10, belong to the party, who gives the wine to be drunk. All these shifts, however, are at once put to shame by Hab. ii. 15. And even apart from the expression, "of the wrath," which places an insuperable barrier against the explanation of the clause that would understand it of seduction to idolatry, it is also quite opposed to the common usage of the figure of making drunk with wine in the Old Testament, and to ver. 10, where the figure is likewise employed in the description of the recompense. Further, that the fornication here can only be feigned love for the sake of self-interest, is clear from the undeniable reference of the parallel passage, ch. xviii. 3, to Isa. xxiii. And in that same passage, since "the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her," is coupled with, "and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies," it would be impossible to make out any proper connection, if we should understand idolatry by fornication. Finally, in ch. xix. 2 it is said, "He has judged the great whore, who *corrupted* the earth through her fornication." From the words that immediately follow, "And has avenged on her the blood of his servants," and from the parallel passage, ch xi. 18, it cannot be spiritual corruption that is meant here, but only material, and such judgment as carries along with it complete destruction.

Ver. 9. *And another, a third angel followed them, and said with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive a mark in his forehead or in his hand;* ver. 10. *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed unmixed in the cup of his wrath; and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone before the holy angels and before the Lamb.* Ver. 11. *And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, who worship the beast and his image, and if any one receives the mark of his name.*—The two first messages are preliminary stages to the third, as is clear from the circumstance, that this last connects itself immediately with ch. xiii. It is here also

that the aim of all the three messages first comes clearly out. They were intended to strengthen men's minds against the temptation which the seeming omnipotence of the beast should present to the followers of the Lamb, and arm them against his seductive arts by the solemn call: worship not the beast, for the hour of judgment has come, Babylon is fallen, etc. How great the temptation is, and how weak the human heart, is evident from the strong colours, which are here thrown into the delineation. Bengel: "This above all measure dreadful threatening is undoubtedly the most severe to be found in scripture." Fear can only be driven out by a stronger fear. "The ancient Cyprian often strengthened his exhortations to steadfastness under bloody persecutions with this word." Let us shut it fast up in our hearts! *The times are drawing nigh, when we shall again need such heroic means against fear!* The threatening is directed against the worshippers generally, not against those, who suffer themselves to be seduced. But the aim, toward which it is spoken, is to guard against seduction. Who, to avoid drinking out of the beast's cup of wrath, would join himself to the company of those, who must drink out of the cup of God's wrath, and be tormented with fire and brimstone for ever?—The assigning of a ground for the preceding threatening furnishes, at the same time, the starting-point for the threatening here. This refers to the punishment in general, and in its widest compass; then follows the allusion to the fearful acmé of the punishment, the pains of hell.[1]—On the figure of drinking of wine, comp. on ver. 8. It is not unfrequently used in the Old Testament with reference to impending judgments. The fundamental passage is Ps. lx. 4; on which rest Ps. lxxv. 8; Isa. li. 17, 22; and again on the latter, Jer. xlix. 12, xxv. 15, ss., on which Bengel remarks, "Jeremiah must, out of a cup of wine full of wrath from God's hand, pour out to many nations; by which is meant, the misery that the king of Babylon was to bring on them." Here the

1 The καί at the beginning of ver. 10 is the accented *and;* it points to the inseparable connection between the action described in ver. 9, and the fate here threatened. In a quite similar way the καί is also used in ch. x. 7. We are not to explain: he will *also* drink, as Babylon; for that Babylon shall drink had not been expressly said in what precedes; nor do Babylon and the worshippers of the beast form any contrast; our message also would then lose its substantiality.

allusion is more especially to ver. 8 of Ps. lxxv., which treats of the overthrow of the proud enemies and persecutors of the church: "For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and it foams with wine; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same; and yet its dregs must sip, drink all the wicked of the earth." By comparing this fundamental passage, we perceive also in what sense it is said here of the wine, that it is mixed (Luther improperly *poured out*[1]) in the cup of the wrath of God. According to it we can only think of a mixture with ingredients, which increase its intoxicating power, give to the wine the character of wine of drunkenness (Ps. lx. 4), or wine which produces the effect of drunkenness. The addition of such ingredients[2] is supported in the fundamental passage, not merely by the mention of mixture (mixed drink), but also by the *fermenting, foaming*. The presence of this pernicious mixture carries along with it the absence of all alleviating mixtures: the mixed is *unmixed*. Among the Greeks it was customary to drink wine mixed with water. This sort of mixture occurs also in the Old Testament, as a weak drink (Isa. i. 22.) In the wine of God's wrath, what corresponds to this mixture with water is the element of grace, of compassion. This can have no place here. That God does not mix for the worshippers of the beast, has its foundation, according to ch. xviii. 6, in this, that they also had not mixed, that their wrath, before the day of visitation, had been a terrible one, tempered by no exercise of clemency. From the frightful punishment, generally, the threatening ascends to its highest point, the punishment of hell: he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone. It was with fire and brimstone that Sodom and Gomorrah were punished; Gen. xix. 24; Luke xvii. 29, "The same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." On the

1 The usage, as well as the fundamental passage, is against this explanation, which is still defended. The signification, in which it takes κεράννυμι, rests merely upon certain passages in the classics, which are analogous to ours—passages, in which at first sight the ascertained meaning seems not to suit—see Stephani, thes. ed. Paris. But if *mix* might really stand for *pour out*, the following ἀκράτου would still render it improper here. For the *mixed* and *unmixed* evidently form an enigmatical contrast. Finally, in the parallel passage, ch. xviii. 6, the signification to pour out is unsuitable.

2 See Gesenius in his thes. under מסך, Wilner in his Real-würt. under *wine*, Drechsler on Isa. v. 22.

ground of this prophetic action temporal judgments on the wicked appear in the Old Testament under the image of fire and brimstone—see Ps. xi. 6; Isa. xxxiv. 9, 10, where it is said, in the threatening against Edom, the type and representative of the enemies of the church, "The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever." In the passage before us the peculiarly disagreeable fire of brimstone is used as an image of the torments of hell. For that these are what are meant here, there can be no doubt from the parallel passages, ch. xix. 20, where the beast and the false prophet are cast together into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone, ch. xx. 10, where Satan himself is cast there, and ch. xxi. 8, according to which the lost have their part in the lake, that burns with fire and brimstone. Nor do the fundamental passages in the Gospels leave any room to doubt, such as Matth. v. 22, xiii. 42, xviii. 8; Luke xvi. 24, and, in particular, Luke xii. 4, 5, to which the words before us are very closely related, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear him." We have only a *variation* of this declaration of our Lord, in the passage now under consideration. The practical point of view in both is the same. Both aim at driving out the fear of man by means of the fear of God. The fire of brimstone, besides, as a punishment, is the righteous recompense for the unrighteous brimstone-fire of their passion, their wrath, their hatred; comp. ch. ix. 17, 18. The torment of the fire and brimstone seizes them, *before the holy angels, and before the Lamb.* These stand over against the instruments of the beast, before whom the true confessors of the Lamb were tormented. That they are to be regarded as the executors of the judgment, is clear from the closely related passage 2 Thess. i. 6—9, where the Lord Jesus appears with the angels of his power, to execute in flaming fire vengeance on those, who know not God and are not obedient to the Gospel. The angels and the Lamb cannot be mentioned as

those against whom they have fought, and whom they now see present with shame in their punishment. For, nothing is ever said of a battle against the angels. The angels are designated as *holy*.[1] In 2 Thess. i., "the angels of his power" is a corresponding expression. Holy = glorious (comp. ch. iv. 8), is applied as an epithet to the angels, in contrast to the impotent creatures on earth, who can give no resistance to the strokes of these august servants of the divine vengeance. Christ appears here under the name of the Lamb, for the same reason that he did so in ch. vi. 16.—The words, "the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever," refer to Gen. xix. 28, where Abraham is represented as looking down upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and the whole plain of Jordan, "and lo! the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." In that great monument of the righteous judgment of God, there was given a matter-of-fact prophecy of the one before us. Hell would be a fable, if it had not such earthly types. What is to be done *hereafter*, can only be regarded as a reality, when the same law that necessitates it is found to be in operation *here*. An allusion is made to the same passage in ch. xix. 3, where it is said of Babylon, "and her smoke ascends up for ever and ever." There, the catastrophe of ancient times is referred to as giving assurance of an *earthly* judgment. The words, "And they have no rest day and night," &c., merely resume the preceding clause about the smoke of their torment ascending up for ever, in order to join thereto the emphatically repeated description of those who are appointed to that dreadful fate: the end of the message returns by a sort of refrain to its beginning. *From what* they have no rest, enjoy no relief, is to be learned from the preceding words; it is from being tormented with fire and brimstone. The meaning is, and they have there no rest. Against the interpretation of Vitringa: but in *this life* they must carry about with them an evil conscience, which gives them no rest day and night, a decisive objection is furnished by ch. xx. 10, "and they are tormented day and night for ever and ever;" as it shews, that we can only understand what is said here of hell-torments, and as the contrast to the

1 This predicate is wanting in many MSS. But the omission has been occasioned merely by the inversion in others, and the uncertainty thereby produced. The bare *angels* would be too bald.

heavenly rest of the saints in ver. 13. The threatening is a frightful one. But it has the security for its truth in the word of the Lord, Matth. xxv. 41, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." In the presence of such an appalling truth, who would ever think of making concessions to the beast, or of yielding a finger's breadth to the world? The clause, "they have no rest day and night," points back to the words in ch. iv. 8, "and have no rest day and night, and say, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God."—This restlessness in intolerable suffering forms the contrast to that other restlessness in the blessed discharge of duty, which needs no relaxation, because activity here is itself refreshing. The choice lies only between these two kinds of restlessness. An intermediate condition, the rest of inactivity, does not exist.

Ver. 12. *Here is the patience of the saints, those that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.* (Luther improperly omits the article before *patience*, and after saints repeats *here are*.) The verse contemplates the point of view from which the preceding description is to be considered, the end it is intended to serve. The object was to strengthen believers in patience, in the willing endurance of all that they had to suffer for Christ, while steadfastly adhering to their confession. Is the hour of judgment approaching? Is the Babylon, that now boasts of her victories, destined to destruction? Are there inexpressible torments awaiting the worshippers of the beast? Then, assuredly, the patience of the saints is here in its proper place (comp. on ch. xiii. 10), which is not weakened and impaired through suffering. Bengel: "It is patience, when one adapts himself to all that he has to suffer, and will comply with nothing that is forbidden." The words, "those that keep," &c., have respect to that, which by means of patience is to be maintained against all assaults; *q. d., that they keep.*[1] That under the commands of God *faith in Jesus*, that is, faith toward Jesus, is to be regarded as holding the foremost place, in which the fulfilling of all the rest has its root, is evident from 1 John iii. 23, "And this is his *commandment*, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ."

1 That the τηρεῖν is used by John, in passages of this sort, in the sense of keeping (see on ch. i. 3, ii. 26, iii. 8, xii. 17), comes out here with peculiar clearness. For this sense alone will suit both the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Where the faith in Jesus is but maintained, there, as a matter of course, will be found the keeping of all the other commandments of God, which here come more especially into notice; such as, thou shalt have no other gods before me, thou shalt love the Lord thy God, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Ver. 13. *And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write: Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord, from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, for their works follow with them.* In the preceding verse we have the negative reason assigned for patience, in the reference that is had to the heavy judgments of God on the Antichrist, and those who allow themselves to be seduced by him; here is given the positive reason, in the view that is presented of the eternal blessedness of the faithful. Who, that has his eye fixed on it, would not willingly surrender his poor life on earth? Who can hang in doubt, when the alternative is placed before him between having no rest day or night from the torments of hell, and a repose from his toils? *The voice from heaven* can neither be that of Christ, nor of God, for it speaks of those who die in the Lord. It may well be conceived to be that of one of the just made perfect, testifying, from his own experience, what the true members of the militant church on earth have to expect in heaven, perhaps one of the elders (ch. vii. 13, 14.) For, the order to *write*, bespeaks the high importance of the declaration. Berleb. Bible: "This command to write is repeated *twelve* times in the Revelation, to indicate, that all the things it refers to are matters of importance, which must not be forgotten by the church of Christ. What, then, is it, that John was to write? What is of the greatest moment for us poor, fallen creatures, to know in life and death?—So then may the Spirit of Jesus Christ himself write these words, which are so true and certain, with his finger on all our hearts, and engrave them on our minds, that they may no more be overlooked or forgotten! They shall indeed be of good service to us, if with all seriousness we lay hold of them, and treasure them up in a really good heart." That the blessedness spoken of does not refer to the great distress of the world, which the persons in question have escaped, as is supposed by some, who, unseasonably, compare Isa. lvii. 1, 2, but only to the felicity

of heaven, appears from what follows, where they are declared to be blessed on account of their resting from their labours. It is the *dead* that are the subject of the declaration, because the blessedness belongs to the state after death; *q. d.* Blessed after their death are those, &c. It is not said, they are dead; for it is intended to give courage for death; but it is said: the dead, in order to determine the sphere of blessedness. Some suppose, that the dead are here regarded in the spiritual sense; thus Bengel: "In respect to the heavenly life, we are all dead. Hence our Lord said to a disciple, Let the dead bury their dead. Not only the buried, but also the persons who bury, are alike dead." But the faithful, who alone are spoken of in the context, are never described in Scripture as dead. In Matth. viii. 22, the dead are the unbelieving as opposed to the believing. In Rom. viii. 10, it is said, "But if Christ is in you, the body is dead, indeed, because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." Comp. on ch. iii. 1.—*The Lord* is the Lord Jesus; comp. xxii. 20, xi. 8, and the fundamental passage, 2 Thess. iv. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 18, where the discourse is of the dead and such as sleep in Jesus. A commentary on the expression, *in the Lord*, by faith incorporated with him, is supplied by John xv. 4, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Those that die in the Lord are not the martyrs alone; but the blessedness of dying in the Lord is celebrated, in order to excite to martyrdom, to inspire the determination to be faithful even unto death, ch. ii. 10. The connection shews, that we are not to think of the martyrs alone as such. For the blessedness mentioned belongs manifestly to the 144,000, the whole Christian host, in contrast with the worshippers of the beast, who have no rest day and night. Then, the expression itself is against the limitation to the martyrs, as is also the comparison of the fundamental passages. (The brief description in 1 Thess. iv. 16, "the dead in Christ," is here unfolded.) We find the right view given by Bengel, "To die in the Lord, means to depart in the faith of Jesus Christ the Son of God, as a Christian, 1 Pet. iv. 16; it takes place alike on the death-bed, and through the power of the beast; which last, indeed, at such a time was the common mode." —The dead, who die in the Lord, are blessed *from henceforth.*

This *from henceforth* does not form a contrast with an earlier time, during which the dead, who die in the Lord, were *not* blessed. Not that; for the blessedness is quite as old as the dying in the Lord, and this dates from the death of Christ, which brought life to light also for the intermediate state (2 Tim. i. 10). But the expression forms a contrast in respect to a distant future, in respect to the completion of the kingdom of God. It means substantially, *even now;* not merely in the new Jerusalem which is one day to be set up on the renovated earth, but from the very moment of their departure to heaven. It is explained by the conversation between Christ and the penitent thief. This person prayed that the Lord would remember him *when he should come in his kingdom*, viz. at the setting up of his kingdom of glory on the earth. But the Lord grants him more than he sought: "Verily, I say unto thee, *to-day* shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43.) When the malefactor called Jesus Lord, he showed that he was one who died in the Lord. For it is to die in the Lord, when one in the immediate prospect of death confesses to him with full confidence as the Lord. In this book a distinction is drawn in ch. vi. 11 between a glorious inheritance which is obtained immediately after departure, and another which is to accrue at some period in the remote future; and the former, the heavenly blessedness which begins immediately when life here has ceased, is pourtrayed at considerable length in ch. vii. 9—17; comp. also ch. xiv. 1—5. The word here: Write, blessed from henceforth, has its proper complement in that recorded in ch. xix. 9, Write, blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb; which bears respect to the *second* stage of blessedness. The first is referred to, besides our verse, in ch. xx. 6, "Blessed is he and holy, who has part in the first resurrection." This word, *from henceforth*, is a precious jewel, an antidote against the cheerless doctrine that would make a long night go before the bright day; such, for example, as theirs is, who dream of a sleep of the soul. The real sting of the comfortless character of this doctrine does not exactly lie in its throwing the full inheritance of salvation so far back. The throwing back is so much at variance with the essential nature of faith, that the matter itself becomes thereby uncertain. If it is true what our Lord says in the gospel of John, ch. v. 24, "Verily, verily, I say to

you, whosoever heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and does not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life;" then the soul's life in Christ can suffer no interruption; and whenever any interruption is believed to exist, eternal life itself is indirectly denied. The *from henceforth* is a strong shield to the Christian, which may keep him from falling away under all temptations. If in this *now* he must die for the faith, he attains *from henceforth* to a life, in comparison of which the life he surrenders may be regarded as a death.—"Yea, saith the Spirit; this"—as Bengel remarks—"is a very agreeable interpellation in which the Spirit catches up the words that were uttered by the voice from heaven." The Spirit (comp. on ch. ii. 7) is the Spirit by which John was inspired. What is uttered here needs a higher security than can be given to it by "the Christian consciousness." We are not, with Luther, to render: yea, the Spirit saith; but only, yea, saith the Spirit. Hence, we are to supply from the preceding, "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord;"[1] and the following words, "that they may rest from their labours," &c., will then denote more precisely wherein the blessedness consists, or wherein this makes itself to be known.[2] Along with the resting from labours, goes the not resting from saying, Holy, holy, holy, which it is the highest felicity of the elect to be ever uttering. Berleb. Bible, "Souls, which have become truly soft and weary under the burden of this life and the service of vanity, which have learned to sigh after rest, like a servant and day-labourer, these have much work lying upon their back, and it is a sweet word for them to hear, that they shall rest." The labours here referred to are those they have had in the service of the Lord; comp. ch. ii. 2; John iv. 38; 1 Thess. i. 3, iii. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 8, xv. 58. He that would rest must *work*—work, not merely for his own interest, but for him who has bought him. We must the rather think here only of labours in the Lord (in particular of such as were undergone in the

1 In like manner is the main statement to be repeated after the ναί out of the preceding context in Matt. xi. 26: ναὶ ὁ πατὴρ (ἐξομολογοῦμαί σοι) ὅτι οὕτως ἐγένετο εὐδοκία ἔμπροσθέν σου, comp. xv. 27.

2 Exactly corresponding is ch. xxii. 14, μακάριοι οἱ ποιοῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς, where also ἵνα is used to indicate more precisely the manner of the blessedness; see also for another example of a similar use of ἵνα in ch. viii. 12, ix. 20.

conflict with the beast), as the following *works* are manifestly to be regarded as the *product* of the labours. "Work (remarks Bengel) elsewhere imports reward, but not here. For reward follows no one out of this world into the next, but is met with in that world. However, the following of the works indicates that there is to be reward." This furnishes a refutation to the remark of De Wette, "By a metonymy deeply seated in the nature of things work is put as identical with the consequence or reward of work, while elsewhere the latter, according to the lower view of barter, is looked upon as different from the former." This "lower view of barter" has place also here, and wherever the living God is truly recognized. If we identify work and reward, placing the latter only in the satisfaction to one's natural feelings, which accompanies virtue,[1] we should make man his own rewarder.—The *for* has been changed into a *but* by those who have changed the resting into a simple repose. A resting is not to be thought of, if their works do not follow them.—When once the idea of resting is rightly conceived, the antithesis introduced by the *but*, δέ, will not appear suitable.—It is said: not, their works follow *after*, but they follow *with* them.[2] By this the *immediate* consequence and accompanying is denoted. The expression "with them," corresponds to the "from henceforth" going before. The works would follow, though they were only rewarded at the last judgment. Bengel: "Whether there may remain a short, and little regard, or even none at all, of their works in the world, this does them no harm, nor do they inquire about it."

THE SECTION CH. XIV. 14—20.

In ver. 6—13, the temptation, which the apparent omnipotence of the beast carried along with it, has had its sting taken out by the reference to the judgment, which *threatens* the world, that plies the temptation. Here, the judgment, as already *entered*, presents itself to the eye of the Seer, and indeed under a double image—that of the harvest, ver. 14—16, and that of the

1 So Grotius: memoria factorum, unde pax et tranquillitas conscientiae.

2 The expression ἀκολουθεῖν μετά is found out of the Revelation only in Luke ix. 49, where John also speaks in a remarkable manner.

vintage and the wine-press, ver. 17—20. Both representations possess a comprehensive character. What in history is realized in a whole series of judicial acts, which at last run out into the final judgment, is here brought together in one great harvest, one great vintage and pressing of the grapes. Here, as also in the concluding portion of Joel, which is to be regarded as the fundamental passage, it is quite in vain to attempt to refer to a single phase of the judgment, what by its throughout general keeping is at variance with every more special interpretation. Those who attempted this, were led to do so merely from not perceiving the relation of this fourth group to the sixth, the peculiar characteristic of which consists in the representation of the particular phases of the judgment, the harvest and the vintage. But the real import of this section is also misapprehended by those, who speak of the typical or preliminary character of the two transactions. The sharp sickle, with which the harvest of the whole earth is reaped, and the clusters of the vine of the earth are cropt, has a quite peremptory character. It leaves nothing over for a future judgment; the range of the judgment is an unlimited one; its sphere is the whole earth; and its severity also is such as to admit of no further increase. The expositors in question have falsely substituted the provisional nature of the judgment itself for the general character of the description given of the judgment.—The practical aim is, to give courage before the world. For this nothing can be better adapted, than to "consider its end," Ps. lxxiii. 17. Whoever, looking beyond its seeming almightiness, will fix his eye on the white cloud, and the Son of man on it with his sharp sickle, he can afford to laugh at the threatenings of the world; he knows, that it will soon itself suffer something far worse than it can inflict on him; and that he should inevitably be involved in its punishment, if he were to follow its guidance. Stephen, indeed, found it an easy matter to be steadfast. But the secret of his strength lay in this, that he was full of the Holy Ghost, and in consequence looked up toward heaven and saw the glory of God, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. The Spirit would also raise us to like strength, when he speaks through John and sets before us such representations as those under consideration. Any one, that will take these to himself, will find himself cured of that

natural cowardice, which still clings to all, even the most courageous, and shall be enabled to ride upon the high places of the earth.

Ver. 14. *And I saw, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud sat one, who was like a Son of man; he had a golden crown upon his head, and in his hand a sharp sickle.*—The cloud brings a *judgment* in view; (comp. on the clouds, with which, or attended by which the Lord comes, as a shadow of the judgment at ch. i. 7.) That the cloud is *white*, is because of the glory of him who comes to execute the judgment; (see on *white* as the colour of bright splendour, the symbolical emblem of glory, and hence the prevailing colour in the manifestation of Christ, at ch. iv. 4); hence the whiteness bespeaks the frightful character of the judgment. In Luke xxi. 27, and Matt. xxiv. 30, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," this latter expression, "with power and great glory," corresponds to the white cloud in the passage before us. A glance at the white cloud is as consolatory to the church, as it is terrible to the world, for which it is the herald of destruction. When the Lord's people find sorrow and tribulation in the world, when every thing appears to be lost to them, when they are apt to become faint through the temptations of the world, let them but direct their view to the white cloud, and they will be comforted and strengthened.—On the words, "and on the cloud sat one, who was like a Son of man," comp. ch. i. 13, "And in the midst of the lamps one, who was like a Son of man." Here, as there, allusion is made more immediately to Matt. xxiv. 30. But the proper fundamental passage is Dan. vii. 13, "Behold upon the clouds of heaven came one, like a Son of man."—The *crown* is everywhere in the Revelation the sign of royal dignity, of dominion —comp. on ch. ix. 7, vi. 2. Christ bears it as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, to whom, consequently, all judgment is committed, comp. ch. xix. 12.—The *sickle*, the instrument of reaping the harvest, Christ bears as the Lord of the harvest (Matt. ix. 38, comp. Mark iv. 38.) "To bear in the hand a sharp sickle, means to be ready and prepared for the execution of a frightful judgment of God against the enemies of the church." By the image

of the harvest in Scripture is denoted primarily the spiritual harvest, or the gathering of souls into the church of Christ (Matth. ix 38; John iv. 35.) Then, it signifies "the end of the world," the final decision on the fates of the righteous and the wicked, when both parties shall be gathered to their proper portion, and housed, as it were, in their own dwelling (Matt. xiii. 30, 39; Mark iv. 29.) Finally, it denotes the harvest of wrath, the one-half, in a manner, of that more comprehensive application of the image, "when the sin and wickedness of men shall have grown till it has become ripe for visitation and just punishment." This last use of the image is the oldest, the one which already occurs in the Old Testament. The proper fundamental passage is Joel iii. 12, 13, where, in the description given of the judgment on the heathen, in which all judgments on the enemies of the church are combined into one grand image, it is said, "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great." The ripeness of the harvest, the fulness of the vats, indicates the fulness of the guilt. On the expression, "get you down," comp. ver. 11, "Cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord," the heavenly heroes (Ps. ciii. 20), who shall make easy work with the pretended ones on earth. The whole address in ver. 13 is directed to the mighty ones, the angels, with the angel of the Lord at their head. In like manner, in Isa. xxvii. 11, the harvest is the harvest of punishment; it is said there of the world's strong ones, "when their harvest has become dry they shall be broken off." And in Jer. li. 33, where it is said of Babylon, "Yet a little while, and the time of her harvest comes." There can be no doubt that here also the figure denotes the harvest of punishment, and that we are to reject the interpretation of Bengel, who remarks, "the vintage is expressive only of wrath and punishment, the harvest is entirely of a gracious character. By the harvest a great multitude of the righteous, by the vintage a great multitude of the wicked are taken from this world." In a prophetical book like ours, it is from the first probable, that the prophetical use of the figure is the one that would be adopted. The special allusion to Joel is clear from this, that here, precisely as there, the harvest

and the vintage are immediately connected with each other. It admits of no doubt that the passage in Joel iii. 13 is the text which forms the foundation of this whole section, and that consequently the application of the image there furnishes the key for the one made here. In ver. 15 there is a literal allusion to Isa. xxvii. 11. The express mention of the sharpness of the sickle shows, that we have to do with a judgment. Bengel himself remarks, "The sharper the sickle is, the more it takes at once, and the more quickly is the cutting accomplished." The mention of the cloud also points to a work of judgment; wherever Christ appears on a cloud the work immediately in hand is always a judgment. The name, too, of the Son of man points in the same direction, as it is chiefly used, according to the fundamental passage of Daniel, when Christ appears for judgment—comp. John v. 27, and Rev. i. 13. A contrast, such as Bengel supposes between the harvest and the vintage, is not indicated in a single trait. The bringing home of the righteous is never represented in any other part of Scripture by the image of the harvest, and here also it is quite unsuitable to the connection.—Many expositors have supposed that it is not Christ who appears on the cloud, but an ordinary angel. But the marks of Christ are too plain—the form of a Son of man (a word which, from the original passage in Daniel, has been, as it were, set apart for Christ), the sitting on the cloud, the golden crown (the elders might fitly bear a crown, ch. iv. 4, but the angels never appear arrayed in crowns), the sharp sickle as the symbol of his judicial power toward the enemies of his church,—and what has been urged against Christ as the subject cannot stand examination. It has been said, that the person sitting upon the cloud is pretty plainly indicated to be an angel; for in ver. 15 *another* angel is spoken of. But Christ also appears as an angel in ch. vii. 2, x. 1, xviii. 1, xx. 1. It is urged that Christ cannot receive a command from an angel (more correctly, *through* an angel.) But the same thing occurs in the Apocalypse as in the Gospel of John, where "the activity of the Son always takes its impulse from that of the Father, and treads in its footsteps" (Kœstlin, p. 97), where Christ says in ch. v. 30, "I can do nothing of myself, as I hear, so I judge," and in ch. v. 19, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he

doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise;" and where, in ch. v. 27, the power of Christ to execute judgment is referred back to the Father. In like manner the Apocalypse expressly teaches, that the Son has nothing which he has not received from the Father—comp. on ch. i. 1. In the angel who here brings to Christ the commission of the Father, this view of Christ's dependence on the Father, to whom he is united by identity of nature, and whose will is not alien to him, has assumed, as it were, flesh and blood. By the *description of his appearance* satisfaction is done to the identity of nature, which is brought out with equal distinctness in the Apocalypse and in the Gospel. It is further urged, that the angels, and not Christ, are represented in Matth. xiii. 41 as executing the judgment. That passage, however, does not exclude Christ from sitting on the cloud, but rather implies it. For there, too, the Son of man appears as presiding in the judgment, while the angels are only his servants. If it was not Christ who sat upon the cloud, he would be altogether excluded from the judgment—He, to whom, even according to John, the Father has committed all judgment, and whose presence was the more indispensable here, as the judgment to be executed is against the enemies of the Lamb. Finally, it is alleged that the contrast here to the harvest-angel is the angel of the wine-press, and that this cannot possibly be Christ. But the angel of the wine-press is certainly Christ; and because he is so, it must be he also, who appears with the sharp harvest-sickle.

Ver. 15. *And another angel went out of the temple, and cried with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send thy sickle and reap, for the hour for reaping is come; for the harvest of the earth has become dry.*—The heavenly temple (comp. on ch. vii. 15, xi. 19), is the symbol of the church; and the seat of God, not generally, but only in so far as the affairs of the church are concerned. It is simply on this account, that the command to reap goes forth from the temple, the misdeeds to be punished being such as had been committed against the church, and so the judgment had its root in the relation of God to his church on earth.—The call to *send* the sickle, rests on a personification of the sickle, the instrument is represented as an *assistant*.[1]—The

[1] In Mark iv. 29, the expression ἀποστέλλει τὸ δρέπανον occurs exactly as here. The poetical expression points to a poetical ground, the passage in Joel. In other

expression, *the hour is come*, occurs in no part of Scripture so often, as in the Gospel of John, comp. ch. ii. 4, vii. 30, viii. 20, xvi. 21, 25, 32, xvii. 1, etc. There are not properly two reasons assigned for the call, as Bengel supposes, but only one—the hour is come; and this again is based on the consideration, that the harvest of the earth has become dry. The punishment must not be delayed, if the measure of iniquity has become full (see Gen. xv. 16; Matth. xxiii, 32), "Where the carcase is, there the eagles shall be gathered together." If any one, therefore, would know, whether a new phase of the harvest may be drawing nigh, he has only to inquire, whether the fields are becoming "white to the harvest." That such is the case in the present day, that now the harvest of the earth has become dry, who can doubt? Bengel even in his day complained, "Any one that will carefully investigate the matter will find, that formerly people were wont to dig more deeply, that they possessed a spirit of greater seriousness, that they held more firmly by the word of God, that the obligations of holiness and the experiences of spiritual influence were much more inward, more savoury and tender, and more deeply rooted than they appear to be now. It seems as if much of what had been provided in earlier times, still continued to exist, but with enough ado to save itself from ruin." And during the century which has passed since he wrote thus, matters have been retrograding more and more.

Ver. 16. *And he, who sat upon the cloud, thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.*—The harvest of the earth is ripe, the harvest of the earth is reaped. Whence we plainly perceive the comprehensive character of this judgment. The harvest of Babylon is only a part of this harvest, the beginning of it. The last great harvest day is described in ch. xx. 9. The word in ch. xiv. 7, "the hour of his judgment is come," entirely agrees as to the meaning, only with this difference, that the judgment is there spoken of as at hand, and here of having already entered. He, who may be brought before an earthly judge, should above all have his eye intently fixed on the heavenly judge. "God judges on the earth"—this is the best preservative against the denial of the truth out of fear for human judges,

respects also the passage in Mark is the most nearly related to ours of all the Evangelists.

not excepting the court of judgment which is formed by public opinion.

Ver. 17. *And another angel went out of the temple in heaven, who had also a sharp sickle.* Bengel: "If the world will always do what it pleases in its own time, and makes one display after another, God, on the other hand, knows still better, what is to be done, when his long-suffering has reached its end." The angel is described as *another*, primarily with reference to ver. 15. For only the angel there mentioned is expressly called by that name. If any one, however, would go back to ver. 14, no doubt can be raised on this ground, from the expression, "another angel," as to Christ being here also meant by it. For the name of angel has respect, not to the *person*, but to the *mission*. We can think of none but Christ. For, the two images of the *harvest* and the *vintage* are too closely connected with each other, to admit of the latter, along with the treading of the grapes, being given up to another than him to whom the former belonged; the rather as the badge of the sickle is common to both. The work, besides, is too great, to be committed to a single ordinary angel, and the office would tread too closely on the honour of Christ, to whom all judgment has been committed by the Father. The character of the judgment also, as exercised upon the enemies of Christ, would thereby be darkened. Finally, the one who treads the wine-press can, according to Isa. lxiii., be no other than Christ, and he also appears as such in the passage, ch. xix. 15, from which the one before us cannot be divorced.—That the angel proceeds out of the temple, shews that Christ appears for the good of his persecuted church, with the sickle.—In regard to the words, "Who had also a sharp sickle," it is clear, that we must not substitute for the sickle another instrument, one commonly used in the gathering of grapes. The small agricultural interest is overbalanced by the higher design of indicating, through the oneness of the instrument, the internal connection that subsists between the harvest and the vintage.—When fear would drive any one to concessions, let him only glance at this angel with the sharp sickle, that comes out of the heavenly temple, and he will feel as if a sword pierced his heart.

Ver. 18. *And another angel went forth from the altar, who has power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him, who had*

the sharp sickle, and said, Send thy sharp sickle, and cut the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its clusters have become ripe.—Bengel: "In the harvest he, to whom it is cried with a loud voice, is more gloriously described; but in the vintage a peculiar power is ascribed to him, who calls with a loud cry, and demands the gathering of the grapes." The fact, that here he who has the sharp sickle is less pointedly described, is to be explained from the closely related character of the two images of judgment. The second representation is to be supplemented from the first. The altar, without any additional epithet, is the altar of burnt-offering. That the angel goes forth from it may be explained by a reference to Amos ix. 1, "I saw the Lord standing upon the altar; and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake; and cut them on the head all of them; and the remnant of them I will slay with the sword; he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered." Ezek. ix. is also to be taken into account as a farther enlargement of this declaration, and as the oldest commentary on it. There, at the Lord's command, who comes to deliver his people, appear the ministers of his righteousness. They step forth (the scene is in the temple) beside the brazen altar. Hence, with Amos this altar is the place of transgression. *There* lie the unatoned iniquities of the people in one huge mass, the iniquities of both houses of Israel, instead of the rich treasury of love and faith which should have been found there embodied in sacrifice. In that place of transgression the Lord appears for the purpose of glorifying himself in the destruction of those who would not glorify him in their lives. So now, we might suppose here also that the angel comes from the altar on account of the foul gifts which had been presented on it—on account of the brimstone-fire of the hellish wickedness which had been burning there instead of the holy fire of God's sacrifice. But what decides against this interpretation is the circumstance that the altar belongs only to the church, while the heathen, who are the subjects of the judgment, had nothing to do with it; they had not defiled it with their gifts, and could not call forth the divine vengeance upon the desecration. We must, therefore, seek for an explanation of this passage in ch. vi. 9, 10. Under the altar of the heavenly sanctuary lie the souls of those who were slain for

the word of God and the testimony which they had, in consequence of their being sacrificed on the altar. From thence the slain cry with a loud voice, and say, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth!" The angel comes forth from the altar to avenge the blood of the saints which had been shed *upon* the altar. Then, we can also understand why the angel should come *out of* the altar and not *from* it, as if ascending from its base, because, according to ch. vi., the souls of the martyred saints lay there. (Ewald's attempt to substitute *from* for *out of* is quite unsuccessful.) Ch. xvi. 7 also, where the altar is represented as saying, "Yea, Lord, righteous and true are thy judgments," favours this explanation. The altar is there viewed as the place where the blood of saints and prophets had been shed. Still further, ch. ix. 13 is analogous, where the punishment of the world is sought from the *golden* altar, as the place of the prayers of God's people. *There*, as having respect to the thirst for the execution of God's judgment on the world, the ardent supplication of the saints; *here*, their blood.—The angel has *power over fire*. *Fire* is commonly used in the Revelation as the symbol of divine wrath and judgment (comp. on ch. iv. 5, viii. 5); and that it is to be taken in this sense here also, is plain from the message that follows, which treats of the execution of judgment without making any mention of fire, which consequently must be fire, not in a literal, but a figurative sense. In ver. 19 the *wrath* of God corresponds to this fire. That his wrath should appear under the image of fire has its foundation in the reference to the fire of the altar. The fire of God's wrath utterly consumes those who are accused before God by the fire of the sacrifice of his saints; comp. ch. viii. 5, where, in like manner, the wrath-fire is used in reference to the fire of the altar, only with this difference, that the fire there is the fire of *prayer*, here the fire of *sacrifice*. The power is of such a kind as may belong to an angel; he who has power is at the sametime under power (Matt. viii. 9.) The power is that only of a subaltern. In the full sense God alone has power over fire (comp. xvi. 9.) A limitation is also supplied by what follows; as from this it appears that the power over fire consists in the circumstance, that he has to carry to him, to whom the Father has committed all judgment, the message that

the time for it had now come. On the words, "the clusters of the vine of the earth," Bengel remarks, "The blood-stream (rather, the sea of blood) thereof is so deep, and runs (extends) so far, that no other field but that of the whole world is great enough to bear such vast clusters."

Ver. 19. *And the angel struck with his sickle at the earth, and cut the vine of the earth, and threw* (the cut-off clusters) *into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.* What the wine-press is for common clusters, that is the wrath of God for these.

Ver. 20. *And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the bridles of the horses, a tract of a thousand six hundred stadia broad.* The city, without any accompanying epithet, can only be the city, which was the city by way of eminence in the strictly bible territory, "the holy city" (ch. xi. 1), Jerusalem. But this in the Revelation is always a designation of the church (see vol. i. p. 425.) That the wine-press was trodden out of the city, indicates that the members of the church are not the object of the judicial agency of God, that this has respect to the execution of judgment on the world as opposed to the church. Parallel is ch. vii. 1—8, which represents the preservation of believers amid the judgments that threaten the world. The despised and hated "city" is now the only place of security and deliverance; but its gates are shut against its despisers and enemies. What is said of the *triumphant* church in ch. xxi. 27, "and there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie," and in ch. xxii. 15, holds true also of the church militant. Bengel: "We here learn that the wicked are to be altogether excluded from the city of God as castaways; that they themselves shall be made to feel to their cost how great a salvation they have despised, and that they shall be made to serve as a salutary and refreshing spectacle to the inhabitants of the city of God." Comp. Isa. lxvi. 24. According to ch. xx. 9 we have probably to conceive of the "city" as being besieged by those who are here thrown into the wine-press. In the last chapter of Joel, also, the enemies on whom the judgments of God alight are gathered against Jerusalem; by which is expressed in a sensuous form the idea, that hostility to the church is the occasion of the judgment.—*Blood* comes forth from the wine-press. Wine is

called in the Old Testament (Gen. xlix. 11; Deut. xxxii. 14) the *blood of grapes*, not on account of its red colour, but because it is prepared from the juice and strength of grapes; comp. Isa. lxiii. 3—6. But *these* grapes yield real blood.—The *blood reaches*, so deep is the sea of blood which comes from the destruction of all the wicked on the earth, *even to the bridles of the horses*. "Oh! how vast a supply of fruit must there have been to afford so great a stream of blood!" The mention of the horses' bridles seems at first sight to shew that in the execution of the judgments, which are here gathered into a great and appalling image, God may serve himself, to some extent at least, of men; comp. ch. ix. 7, 13—21, where the four angels invade the earth with an incredible warlike force. But the warlike forces may also be those of the heavenly hosts (comp. ch. xix. 14, 15), by which the treader of the wine-press is accompanied in his vengeful enterprise. And this is the natural supposition, according to the passage just referred to, as there the warlike hosts come forth on white horses in connection with the work of treading the wine-press; and as elsewhere no mention is made of human instruments of judgment, either in the harvest or in the treading of the wine-press. What is written there stands related to the representation here, as a part to the whole. The mention of the horses would be too *isolated* if they did not belong to the train, by which the angel with the sharp sickle is immediately attended. In the fundamental passage of Joel also, the heroes or mighty ones are those of God, the angels.—Such is the *depth* of the sea of blood, but its *breadth* measures 1600 stadia. We are here to take for our starting-post the holy city, before whose gates the sea of blood (a sea, not a river, as also in Ezek. xxxii. 6 and Isa. xxxiv. 3) begins, and completes a circle of 1600 stadia.[1] The number denotes a *judgment encircling the whole earth*. *Four*, the signature of the earth (comp. on ch. iv. 6, vii. 1, ix. 14, xiii. 7, xiv. 6) is first multiplied by itself, and then again by 100. Quite similar is the formation of the 144,000; the fundamental number is twelve, first multiplied by itself, and then by 1000. Similar also is the formation of the number 666. According to several expositors the number here must be the length of Pales-

1 The ἀπό of distance from. This peculiar usage is found in the whole of the New Testament only in the Apocalypse and in the Gospel of John, ch. xi. 18, xxi. 8.

tine. But this proceeds on the false supposition that it is a *stream* of blood which is here spoken of, instead of a *sea* of blood. Besides, the length of Palestine cannot be made properly to square with such a measurement; so that we are thrown on mere conjecture, to which no licence is given in the Apocalypse. Finally, one does not see what Palestine could have to do here, since throughout the Apocalypse it has no signification attached to it.

THE GROUP OF THE SEVEN VIALS.

(Ch. xv. and xvi.)

The *fourth* group delineates the conflict waged by the three enemies of the kingdom of God against it; the *sixth*, how they are one after another vanquished. The *fifth* forms a sort of *prelude* to the latter. The kingdom of God has no absolute *past;* all the old deeds of God become new again in it, whenever the circumstances recur, which called them forth. Thus, here, the Egyptian plagues revive again, by means of which in ancient times the beast, whose fury had once more begun to exhibit itself in the days of John, was visited in its *first* form of manifestation, and was at last crushed.

The Seer beholds seven angels, who have the last seven plagues, ch. xv. 1. In the presence of these angels and their work the just made perfect sing, with anticipative confidence, the praise of God, ver. 2—4. Then the seven angels proceed forth from the temple of God, and seven vials are given to them filled with the wrath of God, ver. 5—8. How the seven vials, one after another, are poured out, and what effects proceed from them, is represented in ch. xvi., at the close of which we find the power of the world lying shattered to pieces on the ground.

Ch. xv. ver. 1. *And I saw another sign in heaven, great and wonderful; seven angels, that had the last seven plagues; for with them is finished the wrath of God.* A great and wonderful sign (comp. the expression, "a great sign," in ch. xii. 1, and "another sign" in ch. xii. 3) this vision is called, not in respect to the others, but considered by itself; not in contrast to the others, but as a part of the whole. This book consists of

simply such signs. The words indicate, that a new scene begins. That the sign is called great and wonderful on account of the height of the matter denoted by it, is evident from the intentionally corresponding expression in ver. 3, "Great and wonderful are thy works."—The question, whether the seven angels here are identical with the angels to whom the seven trumpets were given, is a frivolous one. As seven angels are mentioned quite indefinitely, we are alike without grounds for considering them either as identical or as different.—For the present, John sees merely the seven angels, and only afterwards the temple and their proceeding out of it. That they are there represented as coming out of the temple, does not imply, that they had been shut up in the temple. Their connection with the temple serves merely to express a thought, which still could not be distinctly expressed here. —The angels have the seven last plagues. The instruments of these plagues, the seven vials, are only said to have been given to them at ver. 7. How John should have already known, that they had the seven last plagues, is not said. But they no doubt had their signature, which was revealed to him by the Spirit. Their countenance alone must have bespoken them to be ministers of judgment. The eye as of a flame of fire speaks not less distinctly than the vials.—It has often been supposed, that this verse supplies the place of a superscription, introduces by a brief anticipative survey, what is reported at length in the description that follows. And, undoubtedly, it is the case, that the verse to some extent supplies the place of a superscription. But it is not the less certain, on the other hand, that it is not reported on the appearance of the angels by way of anticipation, but that a preliminary view of the seven angels was already granted to the Seer. What was perceived by him in ver. 2—4 implies this; it must have been intelligible to him, if he had not previously seen the great and wonderful sight of the seven angels. It is to what these were destined to accomplish that the song of praise refers, which was raised by those who stood on the sea of glass mingled with fire. Only in the presence of the seven angels could they sing as they did. The song forms a commentary on the appearance of the angels. We have an air without words, if these did not precede. Ch. viii. 2 is quite analogous. There the prophet sees the angels with the seven trumpets. Then in ver. 3—5 follows a sort of

prelude, the vision of the angel with frankincense. Thereafter commences the work of the seven ministers of divine vengeance. —The prophet sees the angels who have the seven *last* plagues. Why they are so called is expressly stated: "because by them is the wrath of God finished." We have here a clear and certain proof for the division of the Revelation into groups. After these seven plagues no others can come. If the wrath is finished (comp. Isa. ix. 20; Dan. xi. 36; Lam. iv. 11) no further manifestations of it can possibly enter. Bengel's remark, "after the completion of the seven plagues, the holy displeasure of God toward the other enemies does not therefore cease," is only an evidence of embarrassment. The subject of discourse is of the *last plagues* generally, of the finishing of the wrath of God, without any limitation as to the object. The song, also, which the conquerors sing on the sea of glass, shows that matters can proceed no farther on the same scene. It implies, that the end is absolutely reached. And if still in the chapters that follow (ch. xvii.—xx.) there are delineated frightful judgments of God, the only possible explanation is, that a co-ordinate series is introduced, that at ch. xvii. we have a new beginning. By these seven plagues the worldly power is completely annihilated. But this does not hinder, that in the following portions other aspects of this great drama should be exhibited; nay, it is necessary that this should be done; a group must still follow, to disclose what we naturally expect after the vision of the three enemies in ch. xii.—xiv. These plagues are all inflicted on the *first* beast and his worshippers; of the fate of the *second* beast, and of the great author of the seduction, Satan, we learn nothing here. And even in regard to the first beast, we still do not receive a complete answer to the questions which naturally arise out of ch. xii.—xiv. The beast is here always represented as a whole, and as the object of the judicial severity of God. But in ch. xiii. 1 mention is made of the heads and horns of the beast. What becomes of these, of the former in so far as they are still present and future, we expect some disclosure to be given. We expect to find represented, not merely the judgments on the beast, the ungodly power of the world in general, but the judgments also on its individual phases. Now, all this we do find in ch. xvii.—xx., to which the present group stands in the relation of a prelude.—The "last" judgments of God are represented

also by the two groups of the seven seals and the seven trumpets. This is as certain as that they each bring things to a termination, have their issue in exhibiting the ungodly world prostrate on the ground. The difference between the present group and these earlier ones is merely, that the former take for granted what is described in ch. xii.—xiv.—that here the judgments alight on the ungodly power of the world, while there the object of the judicial severity of God is more generally delineated. There *ungodliness*, here the *ungodly power of the world.* It accords with this, that the seven plagues are here brought in. This designation of the judgments of God has respect to the plagues of Egypt (comp. Ex. ix. 14), the object of which was not the ungodly world in general, but specially the ungodly world-power. The plagues and the beast necessarily go together. Because the name of plagues was formerly appropriated to denote the judgments of God on the first phase of that power, so here also the judgments that were impending over it are called by the name of plagues.[1]—As compared with the two earlier groups the shortness of this, in its representation of the judgments of God, is peculiar. These follow stroke upon stroke. The meaning of this racy shortness—which has the same end in view as elsewhere the full delineation—which is but one of diverse ways to impress the mind, and is here the more in its place, as the exhibition of the important sixth group hastens on—has been quite misapprehended by those, who conclude from it, that the seven plagues, which accompany the worldly power through whole centuries, and each of which brings together in a condensed form what is constantly repeating itself anew, as often as the worldly power renews its hostility toward the kingdom of God, shall have to run their course in a very brief space of time.—The expression, "is finished," is used by way of anticipation; it shall be finished, when all the seven shall have taken effect.

Ver. 2. *And I saw as a sea of glass mingled with fire, and*

1 That the word has here the limited sense indicated above, is clear from the correspondence of the references to the Egyptian plagues, which pervade the whole description, and is also confirmed by ch. xi. 6. It is only in an exceptional way, that in ch. ix. 20, the judgments of the trumpets are denoted by plagues. The general phraseology does not exclude the particular. If this finds place here, then the plagues, even apart from the explanation we have given, cannot be called the *last* with reference to earlier ones; for no earlier *plagues* had been spoken of.

them that had gotten the victory of the beast and of his image, and of the number of his name, that they stood on the sea of glass and had the harps of God. The *sea* denotes the great flood of the wonderful works of God, of his righteous and holy ways, of his judicial acts manifested among men. The *glass* denotes their blamelessness and purity; and the sea being mingled with fire, indicates that it is chiefly about the manifestations of God's wrath, his punitive righteousness, that the vision is occupied. (comp. on ch. iv. 5, 6.) The meaning of the symbol is given by the song, which those standing on it sing. Both the symbol and the song anticipate what is to be accomplished by the seven angels with the seven last plagues; precisely as in ch. xi. 15—18 in immediate prospect of the last catastrophe, the blessed in heaven rejoice, and the four and twenty elders give thanks, that the Lord now comes in his kingdom. The sea of glass is the product of the deeds of the seven angels, who have not as yet begun their work. But to the eye of faith, whose part it is to anticipate the future, the sea is already there. That those, who stand on the sea of glass, have to do with the impending work of the seven angels, that the sea is a symbolical embodiment of their work, and that their song celebrates it, is clear, not only from the narrative beginning with the angels, and again returning to them after the interlude of ver. 5, but also from the correspondence between the words in ver. 3, "great and wonderful are thy works," and those in ver. 1, "a sign great and wonderful."—The expression, "standing on a sea of glass," carries an allusion to Ex. xv. 1, where Moses beside the Red Sea, with the children of Israel, sings a song to the Lord,—comp. "they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb," in ver. 3. The Red Sea, in which the Egyptians were drowned, and which therefore presents itself as an image of the righteous judgments of God, was a type of this sea of glass.—The subjects are the *conquering*, not those who *have* conquered, if viewed with respect to the present of the Seer, in which the victory was still in *being*. Bengel justly compares "these are they who *come* out of the great tribulation," in ch. vii. 14. The words are literally: the conquering *out of* the beast. This peculiar construction, quite unusual elsewhere, points to the circumstance, that before the victory they were in the power of the beast, and are rendered plain by ch. xi. 7, where it is said of the beast, "and

it shall overcome them and kill them."[1]—The text followed by Luther, after "and of his image," adds "and of his mark," καὶ ἐκ τοῦ χαράγματος αὐτοῦ, in opposition to the best authorities, and also to ch. xiii. 17, according to which the mark consists *either* of the name of the beast, *or* of the number of his name; so that the latter cannot be put co-ordinately with the other.—Harps in the hands of the glorified saints are also mentioned in ch. v. 8, xiv. 2; but *harps of God*, such as are consecrated to his praise, occur only here.[2] Vitringa and others would transfer the scene to the earth, instead of placing it in heaven; but the parallelism of the section ch. vii. 9, xiv. 1—5, decides against this. Accordingly, it is the just made perfect, who here, after having themselves overcome by blood and death, celebrate the earthly triumph of the cause, which they once themselves served on earth, and the judgments of God, by which he brings to destruction its enemy, the beast.

Ver. 3. *And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, and say, Great and wonderful are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of the heathen.* Ver. 4. *Who would not fear thee,*[3] *O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou alone art godly. For, all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are become manifest.*—From the expression in ver. 2, "standing on the sea," from the accompanying harps, which indicate the lyrical character of the song, and from its laudatory matter, we can only understand by the song of Moses the song recorded in Ex. xv., not the prophetical song in Deut. xxxii. So also we are led to infer, from the mission of the angels, which is celebrated by this song. Their work was to renew the plagues of Egypt, the completion of which in the overthrow of

1 Mark: "It is not without emphasis, that along with the conquering of the enemy, an indication should be given of his former power, from which they had vindicated themselves, and of a full escape being made by the victors from his power." There is a similar pregnancy in Ps. xviii. 21, "Out of the horns of the buffalo thou hearest me."

2 The "instruments of the song of God," in 1 Chron. xvi. 42; 2 Chron. vii. 6, are not quite analogous. For these denote instruments, which accompany the praise of God. The words in 2 Chron. xxx. 21, כלי עז ליהוה more nearly correspond.

3 Very important MSS. have merely φοβηθῇ without σε. But in the fundamental passage of Jeremiah, it is said, "Who would not fear thee?" And the simple, who would not fear, has something bald, comp. also ch. xi. 18, xiv. 7, xix. 5.

Pharaoh was celebrated in that song of Moses.—The song is at the same time the song of Moses and of the Lamb. The latter does not belong to the Lamb as its author, but gives glory to him as the Saviour of his suffering people. It is for the sake of the Lamb, that the seven angels are sent forth by God for the destruction of the world, and for the relief of his saints. Hence the song of Moses will also be the song which celebrates the glorious salvation that was obtained for the church through his instrumentality. This is confirmed by a comparison of the passage from which the designation of Moses as the servant of God is taken, Ex. xiv. 31, "And Israel saw that great hand, which the Lord showed towards the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed on him and his servant Moses." In Ex. xv. Moses is not expressly called the author of the song. By the analogy of Ex. xv. 1, and by Rev. xiv. 1, where the Lamb stands at the head of his hundred forty and four thousand on Mount Zion, it may well be supposed, that the Lamb sings this song along with his people. The addition alone "of the Lamb" forbids us to expect a literal agreement with the song of Moses. It would *let down* the salvation effected by the Lamb, if it were represented as a mere repetition of the earlier one. A new salvation, a new song. Isaiah, too, who, in ch. xii., applies the song of Moses to the Messiah's salvation, satisfies himself with some merely verbal allusions, the place of which is here supplied by the express reference to the song of Moses, that is wanting in the prophet. But it is common to this song of the Lamb and the song of Moses, that in both alike *the power of the heathen world is the object of the judicial energy of God.* The third chapter of Habakkuk also is such another variation of the song of Moses. It begins with the prayer, that God would revive his work in the midst of the years; and then praises God for the fulfilment of this prayer, since he had in a glorious manner made the old new again, which there, as well as here, is *anticipated by faith.*—On the words, "Great and wonderful are thy works, Lord God Almighty," comp. Ps. xcii. 6, "How great are thy works, O Lord, very deep are thy thoughts." They are the works and purposes of God for the deliverance of his people, which can only be accomplished by the destruction of the wicked, their enemies. See also Ps. lxvi. 3, "Say to God, how terrible art thou in thy works,

because of the fulness of thy power must thine enemies feign to thee." The works of God there also are his judgments on the proud heathen world. Their greatness and wonderfulness here consist in this, that he has given to the feeble the victory over the apparently omnipotent. Berleb. Bible, "Now the works of God come to their height, just as formerly the wickedness of the world had come to its height." In the epithets, Lord God, Almighty, by which what is said of God is traced up to its necessity in the divine nature, it is implied, that this nature is the source from which the stream of the actions has flowed; comp. on ch. i. 8. On the words, "Just and true are thy ways," comp. Ps. cxlv. 17, "The Lord is just in all his ways, and holy in all his works." The justice or righteousness is manifested in this, that he gives to each their own, to his church salvation, to his enemies destruction. The truthfulness of God's ways refers not merely to his faithfulness in keeping promise, but also to his omnipotence. The truthfulness of God would then also be affected, if he could not perform what he had promised to his church, or what the relation in which he stands to his church on earth, essentially demands.—The justice and truthfulness of the ways of God may be perceived by this, that he makes himself known as *the king of the heathen.* (Luther, by following an unsupported reading, and against the fundamental passage in Jeremiah, has: thou king of *saints*, a title not given to God in all Scripture.) For, the heathen are the power which opposes itself to the glorification of his righteousness and truth. When once this power is laid prostrate on the ground, as it shall be at the end of the seven plagues, then every mouth shall be stopped from complaining against the justice and truthfulness of his ways. The designation of God rests on Jer. x. 7, "Who would not fear thee, thou king of the heathen?" We can have the less doubt of the reference to this passage, as with the first words of it also the following verse begins. The whole subject of that chapter of Jeremiah, which is, that not idols, but God must be feared, is by such a reference quickened into new life in the soul.—In seasons of tribulation on earth, when the worldly power appears to triumph over the church, she has often been led to *doubt* the greatness of God's works, the justice and truth of his ways; to doubt whether he really were the king of the heathen. Now this doubt is put to shame; it is dispelled

by deeds; the clouds, which veiled the glory of God from her eyes, are made entirely to vanish.—The *fear* in ver. 4 comprehends reverence. That God is everywhere to be feared, and his name to be glorified, has its foundation in the truth, that he alone is holy. The word ὅσιος, godly, when used of men, denotes a tender and solemn regard toward God and the relations appointed by him;[1] when used of God, which, in the New Testament, it is only here and in ch. xvi. 5, it denotes regard to his own character and the government of the world as grounded therein. In ch. xvi. 5 also, the word is used in reference to his regard for justice, which he maintains through his judgments. It differs essentially from *holy*. For this, in the language of Scripture, denotes the absoluteness that is in God, and comprehends not merely sinlessness, but also omnipotence. *Uprightness*, ישר, when used of God, much more nearly corresponds to what is meant by *godly*. But God is called godly, not only in contrast to men, but also to the heathen gods, which violently broke through the limits of the moral order of the world. Indeed, according to the fundamental passage, Ps. lxxxvi. 8, 9, "Among the gods there is none like to thee, O Lord, and nothing is like thy works; all heathen whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and give glory to thy name," the contrast with heathen gods is pre-eminently to be taken into account, which in this antagonism to the proper idea of the divine must necessarily be abolished. How much there is to do with the "Thou only art godly," is most clearly exhibited in the representation of Nägelsbach in his Homeric Theology. He says there, at p. 31, "We never find holiness expressed as a constituent element of divinity, so long as this is considered by itself, or may be understood from the converse of the gods with each other. Never is an epithet applied to deity, which indicated the consciousness of anything like that which is meant by the Bible when it speaks of the holiness of the true God. The famous declaration of Herodotus: the deity is envious, finds an ample confirmation even in Homer. Among themselves, indeed, the gods are not envious

[1] Plato, Gorg. p. 507, B: περὶ μὲν ἀνθρώπους τὰ προσήκοντα πράττων, δίκαια ἂν πράττοι, περὶ δὲ θεοὺς ὅσια. Plutarch. Demetr. c. 24: τοῦτο δὲ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς ὅσιον, καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους δίκαιον. Polybius 23. 10. 8, παραβῆναι καὶ τὰ πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους δίκαια, καὶ τὰ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς ὅσια.

of good fortune. And the representation given in Homer of human affairs has provided for the gods an instrument, as it were, in the furies, for avenging as guilt and sin uninterrupted good fortune, which, though in itself guiltless, yet appears as unnatural, and trenching on their prerogatives.—Because the wrath of deity in Homer has respect, not so properly to the sin as to the person of man, it is never appeased by a confession or renunciation of sin. The *personally* offended deity can at pleasure strike so high the worth of the offence committed against it, that all satisfaction offered by man will still remain below the estimate. Hence, even on this territory the gods continue standing in the sphere of common human nature, as they do also generally in all mental affections." That God alone is godly is affirmed primarily on this account, that all heathen shall come and worship before him; and this again grows out of the circumstance, that his righteous deeds (ch. xix. 8) or his judgments have become manifest. We might suppose that the coming of the heathen serves as a reason only in connection with this its foundation, *q.d.* for thy righteous deeds are made manifest in so glorious a manner, that all heathen shall come and worship before thee. But for this supposition we have no sufficient ground; the coming of the heathen also of itself is a proof of the declaration, that God alone is godly. For such a result could take place only in consequence of God making known his righteous character. And the fundamental passage of Ps. lxxxvi. 8—10 quoted above, from which the expression "glorify thy name" is taken, is against the supposition, as is also the *alone*. There, too, the maintaining of the glory of God is made primarily to appear from the coming of the heathen—comp. Zeph. ii. 11; Zech. xiv. 9, 16. But the confidence in respect to the coming of the heathen is founded in the fact, that God's greatness manifests itself in glorious deeds, corresponding to the word, "for thy judgments are become manifest." It is the reference to this fundamental passage which has given rise to the future, "shall come and worship." Otherwise, the preterites would have been used according to the general style of the song, which anticipates the future. *Now* also in reality the future has in great part been changed into the preterite. In consequence of the righteous procedure of God all heathen *are* already come. The "all heathen" receives its limitation from what fol-

lows, ch. xvi. 19, 21, according to which the heathen to the very last harden themselves against the judgments of God that fall upon them, and repent not to give him glory. The heathen referred to, therefore, are only those who among all sorts of people fear God and do righteousness (Acts x. 35), persons of susceptible minds, who are capable of laying to heart the righteous deeds of God, and of receiving a deeper impression from his holy procedure toward men on earth. Minds of this description are at all times to be found on earth; minds feelingly alive to the fact, that God avenges the cause of Christ and his church on an indifferent and persecuting world, and that by mighty deeds he shows himself to be a God that judges in the earth.

Ver. 5. *And after that I saw, and the temple of the tent of the testimony was opened in heaven.* The expression, "After that I saw," indicates that here the main scene begins, and that what went before has only the character of an introduction, a prelude. That the building of this group is provided with such a portal, draws a broader line of demarcation between it and the preceding vision, and tends to make its independence more manifest.[1] What is signified by the opening of the temple, and the procession of the angels out of it, may be understood from the more specific description given of it: *the tent of the testimony.* (The temple of the tent of the testimony, *q.d.* the temple in its property as the tent of testimony; it is not said: the temple of the testimony, because in the Old Testament mention is made only of the tent of the testimony. The expression might the more fitly be retained, since the heavenly temple consists as little of stones as of wood.) The tent of the testimony,—so was the tabernacle called, because it contained the ark with the testimony, the law of God which testifies against sin. Importance must here be given to this in the punishment of those who have impiously transgressed it; comp. on ch. xi. 19. The word of the Lord, that no iota or title of the law shall fail, maintains itself in this, that the law is fulfilled on all those who withdraw themselves from a voluntary fulfilment of it. The commandments of God are not a dead letter, but a living force, which falls on the despisers of it,

[1] Vitringa: "For this reason, doubtless, among others, that the Spirit did not wish us to connect the vision of the vials with the former one, which we have seen had its termination in the destruction of the beast."

and crushes them to the dust. It is an elevated spectacle, when the temple of the tabernacle is opened in heaven—dreadful for the world, but joyful, though mingled with trembling for the church.

Ver. 6. *And the seven angels went out of the temple, who had the seven plagues, clothed in pure white linen, and girt about their breast with golden girdles.*—The angels *have* the seven plagues even before the seven vials are given to them. This is to be inferred, not merely from the words, "who had the seven plagues," but also from their going forth out of the tent of testimony. This implies, that they had already been intrusted with the work of vengeance.—In the *clothing* of the angels their mission is represented, the work which they had to accomplish. Even because they are angels, they come into consideration only in respect to their mission, and the clothing cannot, as in the case of Christ (in ch. i. 13), of Michael (Dan. x. 5), refer to the *person*, but only to the *business*.—The *linen* clothing is not mentioned as "the attire of waiting and serving," but on account of its shining whiteness. In ch. xix. 8, the righteous deeds of the saints are denoted by pure and bright clothing. So here, the righteous deeds of the angels and indirectly of God—comp. ver. 4. To the *pure* corresponds in ver. 3 the "just and true are thy ways;" to the *white*, glittering, the "great and wonderful are thy works;" comp. the difference between washing and making white at ch. vii. 14. The sea of the divine judgments and deeds of righteousness is compared in ch. iv. 6 to glass and to crystal: as a sea of glass, like to crystal. To the glass, denoting blamelessness, corresponds here the *pure;* to the crystal, denoting terribleness, awfulness, glory, the *white*. The pure and white also holds in respect to the gold. It is employed here on account of its glittering purity, as in ch. i. 13, comp. ch. xxi. 18, "and the city is pure gold, like unto clear glass;" ver. 21. In Job xxxvii. 22 the bright pure splendour of the sun is called figuratively gold, and to it is compared God's frightful majesty.

Ver. 7. *And one of the four beasts gave to the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever.* That the vials are presented to the angels by one of the four beasts, is explained by ch. xvi. 1, "Pour out the seven vials of the wrath of God on *the earth*." The cherubim act here as the representatives of the living creatures of the earth (comp.

on ch. iv. 6), on which the judgments of God are to alight. The agency of the cherubim in ch. vi. is quite analogous; see on ch. vi. 1, 6.—The symbol of the *vials* rests on the passages of the Old Testament, which speak of the *pouring out* of the wrath of God; comp. the *pour out* in ch. xvi. 1. The pouring out has respect to the *copiousness* of the manifestations of God's wrath. The vials serve the same purpose. They are regarded as vessels, from which it may be conveniently and copiously poured out. The two fundamental passages, in which the pouring out of the wrath of God occurs in reference to the heathen, are Zeph. iii. 8, "that I may pour out upon them mine indignation, all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured by the fire of my jealousy;" and Ps. lxxix. 6, "Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name" (comp. the passage, which depends on this in Jer. x. 25.) By the connection there, the heathen and the kingdoms are not the heathen nations generally, but those which had acted hostilely toward Israel, consequently the same as those, which are here threatened by the vials. The expression *pour out* points back to ver. 3, "have shed their blood round about Jerusalem."—The vials being of *gold* indicates, that the wrath does not stand opposed to righteousness, but rather forms the energetic exercise of it. The purity and the splendour are here also, as in ver. 6, the properties of gold, that are taken into account.—The two fundamental passages lead us to regard the contents of the vials as of a *fiery* nature, and in the Revelation also fire is the common symbol of wrath.—That God lives for ever (comp. on the expression: who lives for ever and ever, at ch. i. 18, iv. 9, 10, x. 6), was given even in Deut. xxxii. 40 as a pledge, that he would completely avenge his own and his people's enemies. In Heb. x. 31 it is represented as a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the *living* God. With God's eternity his omnipotence is inseparably bound up—see my Comm. on Ps. xc. 2. To the wrath of the Eternal here corresponds the wrath of the Almighty in ch. xix. 15. How dreadful the wrath of the Eternal and the Almighty in comparison of the wrath of impotent mortals!

Ver. 8. *And the temple was full of the smoke of the glory of God and of his power; and no one could go into*

the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished. Smoke in the Revelation is always the product of fire, viii. 4, ix. 2, xiv. 11, xviii. 18, comp. Ps. cxlviii. 8; and must rather be regarded in this light here, as *fire* was all but expressly named in ver. 7. For, when the golden vials are said to be full of the wrath of God, this can only be rendered visible by the symbol of fire. But fire, in so far as it belongs to God, constantly appears in the Revelation as a sign of his wrath. It is no contradiction to this view of the smoke, as proceeding from the fire of God's wrath, that it is said to be the smoke "of (literally, out of) the glory of God, and of his power." For, this does not properly denote the origin of the smoke, but the origin of the fact, that the temple was *full* of the smoke of God. In Hab. ii. 14, also, "for the earth is full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as waters cover the sea," the glory of the Lord is an angry one, manifesting itself in judgments. So also in the fundamental passage, Numb. xiv. 21; and here in ver. 10, and in ch. xvi. 19, where the wrathful glory of the Lord appears before the whole community. It is decidedly confirmed by Isa. vi. 4, "and the house was full of smoke." The whole manifestation there bears a wrathful character. Isaiah cries out before an angry God, "Woe is me, for I am undone." The message he receives is one of wrath. Of the same description, too, is the smoke in Ex. xix. 18, "And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace." The whole manifestation there also was an angry one—comp. Heb. xii. 18. It called aloud to Israel, that his God was a consuming fire, that no one could escape, who might venture to set at nought his commandments. Nowhere in Scripture is smoke a symbol "of God's presence as rich in grace," or "a covering of the divine majesty, so that no one might come too near, or approach at an unseasonable time." (See my Comm. on Ps. xviii. 8, and for some further remarks on smoke as a symbol of divine anger).—The *second* part rests on Ex. xl. 34, 35, "Then the cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." Comp. also 1 Kings viii. 10, 11, "And it came to pass, when the priests were

come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud. For the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord." The cloud there corresponds to the smoke here, and produced the same effect; although we must still carefully distinguish between them, and not, like Vitringa, put the cloud in place of the smoke in both passages alike. That the cloud, as usual in other cases, bears also a threatening character in the pillar of cloud and fire, is plain from the correspondence between the fire by night and the cloud by day (Numb. ix. 15, 16). It was out of the cloud that destruction came forth on the Egyptians (Ex. xiv. 24). In the pillar of cloud the Lord came down to execute judgment on Miriam and Aaron (Numb. xii. 5.) But there, as well as here, the threatening carries a promise in its bosom. If Israel is truly Israel, it affects only the enemies, and is to him a pledge of salvation (Num. ix. 35.) The God of energetic zeal for righteousness is his God. So long as Israel was the people of the Lord the pillar of cloud exclaimed to all his enemies, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." So here; that the temple is full of smoke, and no one is able to go into it, this is "a sign for believers, that the Lord in love to them was now going to complete the destruction of their enemies." (Züllig.) Besides, we see quite plainly in Isa. vi. the reason why none could enter in. If God manifests himself in the whole glory of his nature, in the whole energy of his punitive righteousness, the creature must feel itself penetrated by a deep feeling of its nothingness—not merely the *sinful* creature, as there in the case of Isaiah, but also the *finite*, according to Job iv. 18, xv. 15. Comp. on the words in ch. i. 17, "and I fell down at his feet as dead." Bengel remarks, "when God pours out his fury, it is fit that even those who stand well with him should withdraw for a little, and should restrain their inquiring looks. All should stand back in profound reverence, till by and bye the sky become clear again." Bossuet, too, "while God strikes, one betakes to flight, and rather endeavours to conceal one's self than to enter into the place whence the strokes proceed. When he has ceased to send forth his plagues we may then again enter into his sanctuary to consider there the order of his judgments."

Ch. xvi., ver. 1. *And I heard a great voice out of the temple,*

which said to the seven angels, go away and pour out the seven[1] *vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.* The loud voice out of the temple can only, according to ch. xv. 8, be the voice of God, in whom the judgment going to be executed for the welfare of the church has its origin. In like manner in Ezek. ix. 1 a similar call proceeds from God, "with a loud voice," to the ministers of divine judgment; comp. there ver. 8, "When thou pourest forth thy wrath on Jerusalem;" ch. vii. 8. The same voice which here delivers the commission to pour out the vials, says, after they have been poured out, in ver. 17, "It is done." There the voice is more exactly characterised as the voice of God. It proceeds out of the temple *from the throne.* Here the same definiteness in the description was not necessary, on account of the relation the verse holds to ch. xv. 8. The words: out of the temple, are wanting in several copies. But even if they were not genuine they would require to be supplied. To the earth belongs also the sea, in the sense in which it occurs at ver. 3.

Ver. 2. *And the first went away and poured out his vial on the earth. And there came an evil and grievous sore on the men, who have the mark of the beast, and worship his image.* Bengel: "In the trumpets the word *angel* is repeated ('And the seven angels prepared themselves to sound; and the first angel sounded,' and so on). Here, on the other hand, the style is briefer: the first, the second, &c., and the seventh poured out his vial. The vials make short work." In the text followed by Luther, this peculiarity in the group of the seven vials vanishes at ver. 3, and the word *angel* is shoved in.—In ver. 1 the earth is used locally. That the word must be used in another sense here is manifest alone from the circumstance that the sea is distinguished from the earth, and so also are the rivers. There must be *an earth upon the earth,* which was set off as a special region for the first vial. It indicates *the earthly minded,* the men who shut themselves up in alienation from heaven. So also in ch. xiii. 12 "the earth and those who dwell on it" mean not at all, those, who locally and corporeally have their abode on earth (for those also sojourn on it who dwell in heaven, ch. xiii. 6), but the earthly minded upon earth. The commentary on the "earth" is formed by "the men, who have the mark of the

[1] The seven is wanting in Luther.

beast." The worshippers of the beast have themselves become beast-like. In ch. xiii. 11 it is said, "And I saw another beast ascend from *the earth.* The designation there of a beast corresponds to the origin out of the earth.[1] The *evil and grievous* sore refers to the sixth Egyptian plague, that of the sore or boil in Ex. ix. 8—12 (see my Egypt and the Books of Moses, p. 117.) In Deut. xxviii, 27 the same disease appears under the name of the "sore (botch) of Egypt," as one common in Egypt. In ver. 35 it is described as an evil one, hard to be healed, "with a sore (botch) that cannot be healed." It was a chronic disease, a bad eruption. In Deut. xxvii. it is mentioned in connection with other diseases that were loathsome, painful, lingering, difficult of cure, but not absolutely fatal. The chief seat of the disease appears from ver. 27 to have been in the knees, and the legs. It is certainly not without meaning, that men and cattle were alike smitten by this distemper. The vile and disgraceful character of it appeared also in this, that those, who were affected by it, after that they had presumptuously entered into a conflict with the Almighty, could not *stand* before Moses. That we are not to abide by the letter here, is clear alone from the reference to the Egyptian plagues. Bengel's remark, "as we understand the Egyptian plagues in a literal way, so should we also understand the plagues under the vials, which are so like to the other," is precisely the opposite of the right view. There is nothing new under the sun; but in regard to the *form* of judgments the divine righteousness is extremely inventive; and there rarely happens in this respect a simple repetition. The Egyptian plagues, besides, stood in a very close connection with the natural state and circumstances of Egypt. If, therefore, a similarity does exist in respect to those plagues, the conclusion obviously is, that we must distinguish between the matter itself and its historico-symbolical veil. Nor ought we to suppose, that the sore here represents the whole genus of diseases, with reference to that historical type, in which they became manifest after this kind. That it is rather an image of a *distressed condition,* is clear from ver. 11, where sores

1 It is from overlooking the distinction between the earth here and the earth in ver. 1, that the reading εἰς for ἐπί has arisen, as also the exchanging of εἰς with ἐπί in what follows, which goes hand in hand with the other. In the former the εἰς τὴν γῆν is quite suitable, since the earth is only the locality, not the proper object of the pouring out. Here, on the other hand, ἐπί is the more suitable.

are again mentioned in connection with *pains*, and where they appear as a consequence of the *darkness* suspended over the kingdom of the beast. The repetition there is an intentional one: it is intended to serve as a finger-post for the right exposition. Disease has also had no independent position assigned it in the seals and trumpets. The correct view has been made particularly easy for us. For, it is such an evil and grievous sore, such a vile, painful, inveterate eruptive distemper, that our people are affected with at the present time. The remark of Bengel, "Because in the vials, and even in the vial of the first angel the image and mark of *the beast* is pre-supposed, this is also an indication, that they belong to a later period," gives a wrong explanation of a right fact. The right explanation is, that the introductory groups have to do in general with the judgments of God on the wickedness of the world, while *here* the representation advances to the judgments on the ungodly power of the world, first in the general, then (in ch. xvii., sq.), in regard to its particular phases.

Ver. 3. *And the second poured out his vial in the sea, and it became blood as of one dead, and every living soul died, that is in the sea.* The sea in the language of the Apocalypse, the sea *of the peoples, the restless wicked world* (comp. on ch. xiii. 1.) On no account can we think of the sea in the literal sense. For that is no sphere for God's punitive and avenging agency. If any doubt might still exist, it would be removed by a comparison of the corresponding symbolical representation in ch. viii. 8, 9, "and the second angel sounded, and like a great mountain burning with fire, was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood. And the third part of the living creatures in the sea died." What was said on this passage, serves also in substance for an explanation of the one before us. That the *sea* is the subject in the expression, "and it was," is plain from the words in the passage referred to, "and the third part of the sea became blood." Here, as also in ch. viii. 8, 9, there is a reference to the first Egyptian plague; Ex. vii. 20, "And all the water that was in the Nile was changed into blood, and the fish that were in the Nile[1] died." *This plague itself possessed a symbolical character;* it indicated, that the blood of the Egyptians

1 According to the fundamental passage "which (were) in the Nile," the well-supported reading τὰ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ is to be preferred, not: all living creatures died in the sea; but: all living creatures in the sea died.

should in just recompense be shed, if they did not repent. Peculiar here is the expression, "as of one dead." This refers to the import of the symbol. If the blood has the appearance as of that of the dead, we are not to think merely of the blood-colour of the water, as anciently in Egypt. In point of fact it is the blood of the dead. Only, here, we have not the fact itself, but merely its symbol. The *as* has respect to this, comp. on ch. ix. 7, 9. The dead did not need to be more definitely described than as the *slain*, because it is only in this kind of death that the blood flows out. That we are not to think here of some general mortality, but of the shedding of blood in war, is evident alone from the symbol of the sea, out of which the beast arose. In ch. xx. 13 also the dead that are in the sea, are those who perished by a violent death in political conflicts.—The scourge of destroying war is placed before our eyes by a double image—the changing of the sea into blood, and the dying of the living creatures in the sea. But the two, perhaps, are not simply *co-ordinate*. In the Egyptian plague the changing of the sea into blood stands in a causal connection with the dying of the fish. Accordingly, the changing of the sea into blood may be referred to those, who perish in actual battle, while the dying of all the living creatures in the sea may be understood of the infinitely greater number of those, who die in consequence of the war, by distress, hunger, sorrow, and disconsolateness, as we may learn from what happened in the thirty years' war. In reference to the all, see my work on Egypt, p. 107.

Ver. 4. *And the third poured out his vial on the rivers, and on the fountains of waters, and they became blood.* The water of the *rivers* is an image of prosperity, and good fortune; the fountains of water indicate the source of a prosperous condition. We find the same symbol also in ch. viii. 10, 11, where at the sounding of the third trumpet a great star falls from heaven, burning like a torch, on the rivers and fountains of water, and changes them into wormwood, so that many persons died of the waters, because they had become bitter. In unison with that passage, where the waters became wormwood, ("and the third part of the waters became wormwood,") we must also translate here: and they became blood. The correspondence between the second and third vial and the second and third trumpet is intentional. It

furnishes a sort of finger-post for the internal connection between the two groups. But it is not less intentional, that the correspondence is only in part. That the rivers and fountains, which latter are also expressly named in Ex. vii. 19, become blood, shews, that *in the place of a prosperous and flourishing state there has come the shedding of blood.* Similar is Ps. xlii. 3, "My tears have been my meat day and night," instead of eating I weep; Ps. lxxx., "Thou feedest them with bread of tears, instead of bread with tears;" Ps. lxxxviii. 18, "My acquaintances, the place of darkness," *q.d.* the dark region of the dead has come into the place of all my acquaintances; Job xvii. 14, "The grave I name, my father art thou, mother and sister, the worm." In the first Egyptian plague there was a twofold symbolical element. It first points to the shedding of guilty blood as a punishment for the shedding of innocent blood. This element was brought prominently out in the preceding plague. The second element is contained in the words of Moses, Ex. vii. 21, "And the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river." As in the first aspect of that plague every thing was indicated, which in those that followed touched the *life* of the Egyptians, even to the slaying of the first-born, and the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, so in the second it contained a prophecy of all that should damage the prosperity of Egypt, of which the water of the Nile was the better fitted to serve as an emblem, since upon it the temporal well-being of Egypt wholly depended. Both the elements are found in Ps. lxxviii. 44, "he turned their streams into blood, and their waters they drank not." How the threatening contained in the second symbolical element was fulfilled, is shewn in ver. 45—48, and that of the first, ver. 49—51.

Ver. 5. *And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, who is and who was, the godly, because thou hast judged thus.* Ver. 6. *For blood of saints and prophets have they shed, and blood hast thou given them to drink; they are worthy!* Ver. 7. *And I heard the altar say, Yea, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.* The Epiphonem in these three verses attaches itself primarily, indeed, to the *third* vial; but the second is closely connected with this, and the first is only a prelude to the two that follow. The seals are

divided by the *four* and *three*. On the other hand, this very Epiphonem serves, in the case of the vials, to separate the *three* from the *four*. In accordance with this the three first vials are united to each other by the brevity that is employed in the description of them: each occupies but one verse. The four last begin with the *sun*, and conclude with the *air*, while the three first keep *below*—to the earth, the sea, the rivers and the fountains. Those who are here also for the division into the *four* and *three*, found upon the remark at the fourth vial: "and they blasphemed the name of God." But this remark occurs again at the fifth, ver. 11, and at the seventh, ver. 21. It is not fitted, therefore, to serve as a boundary line, but rather connects the four last plagues together, and divides them off from the three first. The angel *of the waters* is wanting in the text followed by Luther. The angel alone is mentioned. We may discern the reason of the omission in the visible embarrassment of the expositors, and their vacillating hither and thither. It is God, who sends rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and fills our hearts with food and gladness (Acts xiv. 7.) But the words: "Ah! Lord my God, this comes from thee, Thou, thou alone dost all," only exclude all independent agency; in this matter also, in the distribution and withdrawal of all, that pertains to the necessities of life, God avails himself of the services of his "ministering spirits," (Heb. i. 14,) in whose hand more immediately are the operations of nature (Heb. i. 7.) The angel of the waters here represents the whole host of angels, whom God employs in this service, and *so far* is a purely ideal form, which only belongs to the vision (precisely as the speaking altar in ver. 7), and in the reality becomes manifest in a multitude of individuals. The *angel of the waters* here stands in a near relation to the angel, who moves the water in John v. 4. For, if the water there also is to be taken in a figurative sense, as a designation of the sources by which life is sustained, this figurative use still rests on the circumstance, that the water in the proper sense holds a primary place among these sources of vital sustenance. We have here a delicate and intimate bond, uniting the Apocalypse with the Gospel. The omission here of the words: of the waters, sprang from the same Rationalism, that sought there also to set entirely aside *the angel* (see vol. i. p. 115.) The assaults on the

genuineness of the Apocalypse are a more general attempt to satisfy the same craving, as that which has sought relief to itself in the particular, by silently pushing aside the angel of the waters here, and the speaking altar in ver. 7, as also the speaking altar in ch. viii. 13. In the address to God: "who is and who was, the godly," (the text, which Luther followed, improperly prefixes, Lord, and instead of "the godly," has "*and* holy," or "godly,") those attributes of God are particularly specified, which were manifested by his judgments, and from which these judgments flowed. In regard to the expressions, "who is and who was," comp. on ch. xi. 17. In *that* passage the addition, "and who comes," could not be made, because the Lord had there already fully come. *Here* we have still not reached the last end; four vials are yet to follow. But still, "who comes," would not be properly suitable here, and there was no reason for resuming it now again, after it had already been laid aside at ch. xi. 17. Here respect is not had, as in ch. i. 4, 8, iv. 8, to what the Lord is going to do in the future; but what he *has* done, is brought into view. Here it was only in a fitting way indicated, that the old God proved by deed, that he still lived. As there the emphasis lies on the "who comes," so here it lies on the "who is;" *q.d.* Thou, who by thy deeds hast shewn that as thou hast been, so thou also art. The *godly*, as an epithet is applied to God, in reference to his regard for the moral order of the world, which admits of nothing alien to him, nothing opposed to him or rising above him, but only what is conformable to his own essential nature (comp. on ch. xv. 4.)—The judicial rule, according to which God appears as righteous in the judgments, which he here threatens, was laid down in Gen. ix. 6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," where, according to the connection with ver. 5, it is primarily declared, not what *should* be done by man, but what God would accomplish by means of his righteous judgments; comp. on ch. xiii. 10. But since the rule holds with God, blood for blood, so should it also hold with those, to whom he has committed judicial authority (comp. Ex. xxi. 23.)—Upon the distinction between *saints* and *prophets*, corresponding to that of righteous persons and prophets in Matt. x. 41, comp. at ch. xi. 18. Among the prophets the first place is held by the apostles, whose blood was

shed upon the altar—Peter and Paul; comp. on ch. i. 1; and also in Matt. x. 41 the term prophets comprehend the apostles, comp. ver. 40. That Rome takes the lead in the guilt and the punishment, appears from ch. xviii. 24.—In the declaration, "Blood hast thou given them to drink," we must supply, instead of the water, which they formerly enjoyed; as is evident from the circumstance, that the angel speaks of water. The drinking of blood, (Bossuet, "People fill themselves with the blood of which they are greedy, chiefly in civil wars, in which each seems to drink the blood of his fellow-citizens"), is brought into notice here, not as a crime (as it is in ch. xvii. 6, where the woman is drunk with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus), but as a *punishment;* as it is also in the fundamental passage, Isa. xlix. 26, "And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood." In place of the pleasant drink of water they are made to take the horrid draught of their own blood; their prosperous condition disappears, and in its stead a bitter but righteous doom impels them to rage against one another. The mere, "they are worthy," is more emphatic than, "*for* they are worthy," of the text which Luther has followed.—Instead of: and I heard *the altar* say, Luther has—following an ill-supported reading, and one that has had no better origin than exegetical incompetence—"And I heard another angel out of the altar say."[1] In ch. vi. 9, 10 the souls of those, who were slain for the word of God and the testimony which they held, are represented as lying under the altar of the heavenly sanctuary, in consequence of their having been offered on the altar. From thence they cry with a loud voice and say, "O Lord, holy and true, how long dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth." In ch. xiv. 18, the angel comes out of the altar, to execute vengeance for the blood of the saints, which had been shed on the altar. *Here* the altar itself rejoices in anticipation of the revenge, that was to be taken for the blood that was shed on it. Even Bengel's interpretation, "as in the fifth seal the souls under the altar cried with a loud voice, so without doubt it is they, who here make themselves to be heard, having found after

1 We recognize the origin of this reading in the explanation of Ewald: altare, vocem progressam a coelicola arae adstanti.

the shedding of their blood a resting-place under the altar; and hence it is, as if the altar itself spoke," is still too realistic. The altar itself might as well be said to speak here, as the blood in Gen. iv. 10.—The *yea* does not contain "a perfectly cordial response toward God in all that he wills, and does and says;" but it expresses agreement with the preceding speech of the angel of the waters. It is necessary, so that the two voices of the angel of the waters and of the altar may not fall out with each other; comp. xiv. 13. Without omnipotence (comp. ch. iv. 8, xi. 7, xv. 3, xix. 6), the judgments of God would not be true and righteous. The truth here also refers not merely to fidelity in regard to the promise (comp. on ch. vi. 10, xv. 3); it stands opposed to all mere show, every thing of a partial and superficial kind, such as constantly attaches itself to human judgments.

Ver. 8. *And the fourth poured out his vial on the sun, and it was given to him to scorch men with fire.* The sun is introduced here, not in respect to his light-giving quality (so that ch. viii. 12 is not to be compared), but in respect to his *scorching* power; so that ch. vii. 16 is parallel, "the sun shall not light upon them, nor any heat," and the fundamental passage of Isa. xlix. 10, quoted in the remarks there. As in ch. viii. 12, the splendour of the sun represents a happy condition, its darkening distress, so here the sun in its scorching heat is the image of the sufferings of this life. That the angel pours out his vial on the sun, denotes the extraordinary growth, which through the righteous judgment of God, as a punishment for the growth of sin, was imparted to the sufferings of life for the enemies of Christ, the servants of the beast. It is not of the natural scorching of the sun's rays that we are here to think, and of the injurious effects flowing from it; as Bossuet, for example, conceives, "signifying excessive heats, drought, and at length famine. One sees in St Denis of Alexandria the Nile dried up, as it were, by scorching heat." It is not this, however, as appears not only from the symbolical keeping of the whole,—in the preceding portion, the earth, the sea, the water in a figurative sense—but also from the addition, *with fire.* Fire in the Apocalypse is the usual symbol of the divine wrath and judgment (ch. xiv. 18.) Only when we consider the sun in a figurative sense, is the fire, which is poured out of the vial (comp. ch. xv. 7) homogeneous to the fire of the sun.—

That we must not render, "it was given to it," the sun, but "it was given to him," the angel, is still more decidedly clear from ch. vii. 2 (comp. also ch. iv. 8), than from Bengel's remark, "it was more properly given to an angel than to the sun." But we must explain thus: it was given him *so*, through the medium of the sun, when inflamed to an unusual heat by the pouring out of the vial.—The *heat*, as a figurative designation of sufferings and assaults, is found also in Jer. xvii. 8; 1 Pet. iv. 12. *Men* are not of themselves to be regarded as *fleshly* men, as Vitringa supposes; but the limitation is to be understood here, as in ch. ix. 20, from the consideration that *in the whole context the subject of discourse is the judgments that were to befal an ungodly world.* It is remarked in the Berleb. Bible, "But since they will also be self-tormentors, and one shall vehemently inflame another, one child of the world others around him; so they shall be in the highest degree a hell to themselves, each shall do to his neighbour the part of a tormentor and executioner." In regard to the fate of the members of the church in this vial, which, like all the rest, comprises in one image what is realised by successive stages in different epochs of the worldly power, the solution is given in ch. vii. The preservation of the children of Israel during the plagues which fell on the Egyptians, among whom they dwelt, and with whose fate their own seemed inseparably bound up, has the import of a matter-of-fact prophecy for all times; only, we must thoroughly discard all Mahommedan views of prosperity in life. Here the word holds that is written in Jer xvii. 7, 8, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. He is like a tree planted by the water, and rooted on the brook. And he fears not when heat comes, and his leaf remains green, and he is not concerned when a year of drought comes, and ceases not to bear fruits."

Ver. 9. *And the men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who has power over these plagues, and repented not to give him glory.* The words: and the men were scorched with great heat, stands related to what follows, as the cause to its effect. It is the loose Hebraistic mode of placing the two in juxtaposition; for: And because the men were thus, etc., they blasphemed. The blaspheming is mentioned in connection with all the four plagues, with the exception only of the sixth.

This exception is explained, not so much from the description there being in other respects much more extended than in the others, as on the ground that in it the catastrophe was nearly prepared, and hence the occasion for blaspheming was not fully given. They could not deny the *being* of the Great God; it presses itself upon them with power; it even lies upon them as a frightful load; and if the mouth should deny, the heart would revenge the falsehood. But because they would not recognise the sin as sin, they rage against him as a revolting tyrant; they blaspheme him, because they cannot murder him. "The heart of Pharaoh was hardened,"—this is the perpetual refrain in the history of the Egyptian plagues, which for all times refutes the rationalistic error, that an inherently beneficial power resides in suffering, and which loudly witnesses against every theory that propounds another aim for divine, and by consequence also for human punishments, than that of retributive righteousness. Bossuet points to the fact, that in the times of Roman dominion the heathen threw upon the Christians all the blame of the misfortunes that befel the empire. If we abide by the letter, this certainly cannot be included here. The heathen ascribed their misfortunes to the neglected worship of their gods. But faith in these had so little root in their minds, that we are justified in regarding the allegation merely as a pretext or a self-delusion, and in considering the real ground of their exasperation to be, that the hand of the God of the Christians lay heavy upon them, and that they were bruised by him, whom they would not worship. Bengel remarks, "Blasphemy is a dreadful sin. But in spite of the wicked themselves it still contributes to the glory of God. Blasphemers themselves admit their impotence, since they only resist with their impious mouth; and confess the power of God, which, without any thanks to them, tends to glorify the name of God. They revolt against God, and are in pain, but he is honoured upon them. The saints, when they are overcome by their sufferings, may wish in the depth of their dejection that they themselves were not, as Job anciently cursed his being. But the wicked go much farther, and blaspheme the holy name of God." In regard to the persons blaspheming, the limitation is to be derived from ch. xv. 4. We there learn that the suffering does not prove to *all* a curse, that many find it a blessing, and, like the penitent thief, are filled with contrition,

when they receive what their deeds have deserved. But if we look more narrowly into the case of such, we shall find "that something existed beforehand, which is only quickened into life. What, however, was dead and corrupt, that remains under pains and sufferings as it was, or, if any change takes place, it is for the worse."—They blaspheme *the name of God* (comp. on ch. xiii. 6,) not the Deity, but the God who has manifested himself by his deeds, the God of Jesus Christ, the God of the church which inflames the worshippers of the beast to more wrath, that she constantly confesses this same God to be the author of the calamities under which they groan. They blaspheme the name of God, *who has power over these plagues.* (The best MSS. have τὴν ἐξουσίαν, which Luther omits.) That they blaspheme him *because* he has the power is shown by ver. 11, "*because of* their pains and their sores;" and ver. 21, "men blasphemed the Lord *because of* the plague of hail." *These plagues* is to be explained on the ground, that in this plague the others were substantially contained.—On the words, "and they repented not," comp. ch. ix. 20. The repentance is placed in this, that men *give glory to God.* Glory is given to God by him, who recognizes, that the suffering is a deserved punishment of a sin, and, therefore, that it serves to glorify God, who is sanctified by the judgment. Berleb. Bible: "To give glory to God—to recognize his righteousness, and to fall down under his rod with humble supplication." Bengel: "In repentance, the most essential thing is to give glory to God. Man must at once shut his mouth, or even lay his hand on it: but God receives the glory. Now, where man does not yield, but stands out in a spirit of proud and hardened defiance, there God also does not yield, and in such a conflict man must come far short, he must be consumed." For a moment Pharaoh gave God glory, in Ex. ix. 27, when he said to Moses and Aaron, "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." But it did not last long. "When Pharaoh saw that the thunder and the rain ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants."

Ver. 10. *And the fifth poured out his vial on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was darkened. And they bit their tongues for pain.* Ver. 11. *And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains, and because of their sores, and repented not*

of their deeds. The former plagues fall upon the circumference of the kingdom of the beast, but this strikes its centre and the circumference at the same time, in a peculiarly touching manner. The preceding plagues affect the *throne,* inasmuch as they distress the *subjects;* this descends from the throne to the subjects. When God seeks to destroy a people, he cannot smite in a more effectual manner than by smiting the rulers. *The throne of the beast* is situated at different places in different times; this is as certain as that the beast has seven heads (comp. on ch. xiii. 1.) At the period of the Chaldean dominion, it was at Babylon; comp. Isa. xlvii. 1, Ps. xciv. 20, where the church, in immediate prospect of the Chaldean ascendancy and oppression, says to the Lord, "Is the throne of iniquity bound to thee, which frameth mischief as a law?" At the time of the Seer it was at Rome. At the end of time, after the thousand years, it will be set up again in some sort of way under Gog and Magog. But wherever it may stand, it will be struck by the fifth vial. For, like all the others, this has a comprehensive character; *it accompanies the ungodly power of the world through the whole of its history.* In such facts as these—that Valerian was vanquished and imprisoned by the Persians, and that he had to serve as a foot-board for their king when mounting on his horse—Bossuet sought to find, not *the* fulfilment, but only *a* fulfilment. The whole character of the group of the vials is misapprehended, if an exclusive application is made of it to the relations of Rome in one respect or another. They have all to do, not specially and exclusively with the whore, Rome, but with the *beast, the ungodly world-power in its collective character.* To suppose an exclusive reference to Rome, is to carry them over into the sphere of the following group.—That the throne of the beast is not the *capital city,* but the governing power, appears from ch. xiii. 2, and also from ch. ii. 13. Comp. Jer. xiii. 13, "the kings that sit upon David's throne." Rome was not the throne of the beast at the Seer's time, but the throne stood there, and the Roman emperor occupied it.—In consequence of the pouring out of the vial on the throne of the beast, his kingdom is *darkened.* Bengel: "It properly means: it was put into a dark state. It is, therefore, an abiding, and not a passing and transient darkness, coming over the former long-continued splendour." It is asked, whether the kingdom

stands here in a *passive* sense, of the subject-territory, or in an *active*, of the governing power, the ruling body. In the latter sense it occurs, for example, in John xviii. 36; in this book at ch. i. 6, 9, xvii. 12, 18, "the great city, that reigns over the kings of the earth." The passage last referred to in particular supports the active sense of the expression here. Adopting this, the larger point after *beast* must be removed, so as to allow the cause and effect to stand in close connection with each other; *q.d.* and his *throne* was darkened.—On the *darkening* comp. Ps. cv. 28, where in reference to Egypt it is said, "He sent darkness, and darkened." The doom of darkness is there to be taken in the figurative sense of the doom of displeasure and calamity; from the first to the last plague Egypt was covered in this sense with darkness. There is only an allusion to the last plague but one in Egypt. This was the more fitted to serve as a foundation for such a figurative representation, as even in the Mosaic narrative it manifestly bears a symbolical character, from which alone is to be explained the one-sided prominence given to the darkness: the darkness which covered the Egyptians, the image of the divine wrath. Comp. Wisdom, ch. xvii. 21, "Over them was spread a heavy night, an image of that darkness which should come upon them." That the darkness here also, which had already occurred in ch. viii. 12 as an emblem of distress, is used in a figurative sense, is clear from the circumstance, that in what follows *pains* and *sores* are spoken of as identical with it.—The subject in, "they bit," are the possessors of the throne, and those whose fortune was bound up with theirs. When one bites his tongue for pain (it is something quite different to bite down, to stifle a laugh or a passion), this can only be an attempt to produce a reaction against the insufferable pain that presses on one, by means of another voluntarily inflicted—to deaden the *passive* pain by means of an *active* one; according to the couplet, "What one *chooses* to suffer, 'tis easy to bear; if suffer we *must*, pain and anguish are there."—In ver. 11, "because of their pains," etc., *q.d.* because of their darkness, that is, their pains and their sores. They blaspheme the *God of heaven*, who by his almighty hand brings upon them this suffering, and whom they can indeed blaspheme, though they cannot come at him (comp. Ps. ii. 4.) There is a verbal reference to ch. xi. 13, where it is said of the members of

the church, "and they gave glory to the God of heaven." The church is *improved* by suffering, the world is only the more exasperated by it.

Ver. 12. *And the sixth poured out his vial on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared of the kings from the rising of the sun.* From the rising of the sun (that is, the regions whence these risings proceed,)[1] from the east, the lands beyond the Euphrates, conquering hordes were wont to come from the earliest times down upon lower Asia, and especially upon Cannan—comp. on ch. ix. 14. (It cannot be accidental, that Euphrates is here mentioned under the sixth vial, as there under the sixth trumpet.) From that quarter come here, in vision, the hosts of the enemies of the church, which is represented under the image of Jerusalem (comp. on ch. xiv. 20.) That the designation of the place, from which the enemies come, is only to be understood *typically* is evident from comparing ch. ix. 14, from the circumstance that the object of the assault is only *typical* Jerusalem, and finally from ver. 14, where, in the room of the kings from the rising of the sun, come the kings of *the whole earth* putting the *actual* in immediate juxtaposition with the *typical* description.—The typical preparations of a way through water (the Red Sea and the Jordan) were done for the behoof of the people of God. So also the typical preparation of a way through the Euphrates itself in Isa. xi. 15, 16, and the figurative leading through the sea and the Nile in Zech. x. 11, "And the Lord goes through the sea, the distress, and smites in the sea the waves, and all the floods of the Nile are put to shame." The preparation of the way must serve the same design here, though it seems to have primarily a quite different character (the Lord *appears* here to do for the enemies of his people what elsewhere he did only for his people), is clear alone from this, that the drying up of the Euphrates is a result of *the pouring out of a vial.* All the vials were poured out in behalf of the church, for the destruction of her enemies, and to prepare for her final victory. More prominently still does this object discover itself in ver. 16,

[1] Wherever the plural ἀνατολαί is used, it refers to the daily recurring act of going forth—comp. Matth. xxiv. 27; Luke xiii. 29; Rev. xxi. 13. The ἡλίου is always to be supplied, when the ἀνατολαί are mentioned. The reading ἀνατολῆς has merely arisen from the word being taken in the sense of *eastern regions*, in which case ἡλίου appeared unsuitable. Ch. vii. 2 is also to be compared.

which so far is immediately connected with the verse before us, as it continues the description of God's share in the matter. Vers. 13—15 take into account the hellish-human machinery, the subordinate importance of which is manifest from the single fact, that it is hemmed in on both sides by the divine agency. Bengel: "The text is here wonderfully interwoven together, and is like an artificial web, in which what is covered for a time afterwards comes forth to light again. Vers. 12 and 16 are connected together, and the three verses between are also of a fine texture." In ver. 16 we see, that the way through the Euphrates is opened to the kings, *only that they may get to the place of their overthrow.* The Euphrates is mentioned here merely in respect to the hindrance it presented to the march of the ungodly power of the world into the holy land, against the holy city, against the church. This hindrance—to the terror of all persons of little faith, to the triumph of the world and the strengthening yet more of its enmity to God and Christ—is removed by God himself; what would arrest it is by him taken out of the way—as when, for example, in the time of the Seer, Peter and Paul, the pillars of the church, were beheaded, John himself banished to Patmos, and the church, thereby left exposed to the seductions of heathenism. But when faith is well nigh disposed on account of such things to give way, and the world is preparing to deal out the last blow against the church, then comes the place of Armageddon.—Precisely as God here dries up the Euphrates for the enemies of his church, did God, according to Isa. xliii. 17, lead forth Pharaoh with his host to pursue after Israel. Scripture brings clearly out the truth, that *every step which the ungodly world takes for the destruction of the church, stands under the divine direction*—not merely under the divine *permission*, which a Rationalistic theology would so fain substitute for it,—that God does not simply overthrow the enemies of his church, but also arms them, and that the success of their plans belongs not less to him than their discomfiture; *so that we have everywhere to do only with God.* (See my Comm. on Ps. civ. 25.) Here, too, it is not prophesied what was to be done *once*, but what was to be continually repeated anew, so long as the conflict of the beast with the church should last, which substantially revives again in Gog and Magog. We have also in this vial, as in all the rest, a collective representation be-

fore us of that which in history realizes itself by degrees, and in a succession of acts and scenes. He who has properly received into his heart the contents of this book, can look on with painful delight while he sees one bulwark of the church after another laid prostrate, so that it might seem to be going into remediless destruction.—From the false supposition, that the expedition of the kings is directed toward Babylon, an allusion has sometimes been sought here to the warlike manœuvre of Cyrus, who, according to Herodotus and Zenophon, accomplished the conquest of Babylon by diverting the waters of the Euphrates.[1] That the expedition is directed, not against Babylon, that is, Rome, but against Cannan, that is, the church, is rendered manifest by ver. 16;[2] manifest, too, by ver. 14, according to which the kings assemble together to a decisive battle against God, and of course also against his tabernacle and those who dwell in heaven, the church and believers, (ch. xiii. 6). The Euphrates appears here also not as a hindrance to the *conquest*, but to the way, as the Jordan was and the Red Sea. But it could not have stood in the way of the kings on their march from the rising of the sun, if their course was directed toward Babylon. It would have been quite perplexing, if the prophet had not preserved the relations, as to territorial position, of ancient Babylon, and had removed the Euphrates from the western to the eastern side of the territory. Further, if the expedition was directed against Rome, then, kings from the east would have been mentioned as the instruments of punishment. But against this, it was already remarked by Bengel, " One might suppose, that those eastern kings were to be the instruments of this plague, but in all the seven plagues men are never represented as the instruments of working. It is these kings themselves, that in the plagues are overthrown blindfolded." Finally, an exclusive reference to Rome is against the analogy of all the other vials; they all bear an *oecumenical* character, sweep over the *whole earth*, the whole of the God-opposing wickedness, and not merely some

1 Forbesius shewed a just acquaintance with the peculiar style of the Apocalypse, when he remarks against this idea: Spiritum Dei nihil ex Herodoto vel Xenophonte accersere, sed omnes ejus allusiones esse ad Scripturam sacram.

2 Bengel: " Armageddon lies in the land of Israel, and from the rising of the sun the way to it is right over the Euphrates."

particular phase of it. The special reference to Rome in ver. 19 does not comprise the whole contents of the seal, but the universal reference goes along with it. Quite unseasonable is the comparison of ch. xvii. 12, instead of ch. xiv. 20, xix. 11, ss., xx. 7, ss., where the battle, as here, is directed against God and Christ and his church.

Ver. 13. *And I saw out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits as frogs.*[1] Ver. 14. *(For these are spirits of demons, which do wonders) which go forth over the kings of the whole earth,*[2] *to gather them together to the war of that great day of God the Almighty.* The words, *for they are*, etc., can only be regarded as a simple parenthesis. The expression, *which go forth*, must be immediately joined to, *the frogs.* For the statement, *I saw out of the mouth*, requires to be supplemented by, "to go forth," ἐκπορεύεσθαι; and this is substantially done by the expression: which go forth.[3]—Ver. 13 and 14 are of a regressive character. While they delineate the activity of the enemies of God in the matter, they go back to the first beginnings. In ver. 12, the kings with their people have come on their way against the holy city, as far as the Euphrates. *Here* it is reported, how the summons to the expedition by them goes forth. If the regressive character of ver. 13 and 14 is not perceived, it will be necessary to resort to such forced interpretations as that of Bengel, "The kings from the rising of the sun were before more inclined to such an expedition, but with the kings from the three other quarters of the globe there might be more reluctance, and so the three unclean spirits ply their wicked and powerful ministrations." But, in addition to the incredible nature of this difference, the view is decidedly opposed by ver. 14, in which the subject is not the kings from the three other regions of the globe, but the kings of the *whole* earth; and also by ch. xx. 8, where

1 Instead of ὡς βάτραχοι, the text followed by Luther has, ὅμοια βατράχοις. The ὡς is to be preferred even on internal grounds. The lighter ὡς suits better, as the resemblance is not of a general nature, but refers merely to the impurity.

2 Luther has: to the kings upon earth, and upon the whole compass of the world, following the incorrect reading, τῆς γῆς καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης.

3 Bengel has correctly perceived, that the εἶδον πνεύματα ἐκ τοῦ στόματος needs to be supplemented: sine infinitivo abrupta esset oratio, non enim dicitur bestia ex mari, ex terra, ex abysso, sed ascendens ex mari. But he erroneously prefers the less supported reading ἐκπορεύεσθαι, which is also to be rejected on internal grounds.

Satan is represented as deceiving the nations in the *four* quarters of the earth.—The *dragon*, or Satan in his property as the prince of this world, who contends with Christ for the dominion of the world—the *beast*, and the *false prophet*, who is for the first time mentioned here under this name, earlier as the *second beast from the earth*, these have already been represented in ch. xii. and xiii. as the bitter enemies of Christ and his church. The undertaking to which they stir up, can therefore only be directed against Christ and his church. All three struggle for their existence.—Out of the mouth of these three enemies of the kingdom of God proceed three unclean spirits. Out of the *mouth*, not because the *speech*, but because the *breath* belongs to this—comp. Isa. xi. 4. The proper dispenser of this impure, seductive spirit, stimulating men against the church and its head, is the dragon. The beast and the false prophet have it only at *second hand*, but it finds in them its chief organs. It goes out, however, from the dragon to the kings of the earth, not merely through the medium of the beast and the false prophet, but also *directly*; Satan is not *confined* to his organs. Therefore there are *three* spirits. The dependence of the spirits of the beast and of the false prophet or the dragon, is clear from ver. 14, where also these spirits are represented as spirits of demons, which are ranged under Satan as their head. Ch. xx. 7 also—where in the last phase of the conflict delineated here, Satan goes forth, to deceive the nations in the four ends of the earth, and assemble them to the battle, to him alone the whole work of seduction is ascribed—shews that the unclean spirits do not proceed from the whole three as on one footing of independence.—Real influences proceed from Satan as well as from Christ. Men are placed mid-way between the *good* spirit, that is of Christ, and the *bad* one, that proceeds from Satan. In ch. ix. 2, the *smoke* denotes the hellish spirit, which comes up to the earth. In Zech. xiii. 2, it is said, "I root out the names of the idols out of the land, and mention shall no more be made of them, and also the prophets and the *unclean spirit* will I remove out of the land." According to this passage the *false* prophets as well as the *true*, the worshippers of idols as well as those of God, stand under the dominion of a power lying beyond them, to which they have surrendered themselves by a free act of their own will. The same thing is

clear also from the narrative in 1 Kings xxii., where the spirit of prophecy, personified in accordance with the character of the vision, and appearing in a corporeal form, offers to deceive Ahab by putting false prophecies into the mouth of the prophets of the calves. From this it is manifest, that the *false* prophets as well as the *true* stand under the influence of a power, that exists out of their own nature. By the parable of the tares among the wheat (Matth. xiii. 38, 39), Satan is in possession of the minds of his followers in like manner as Christ of his; he appears as the originator of their wickedness. Bengel remarks, "These are three enemies, that in a horrible way oppose themselves to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. To God the Father is opposed the dragon, the great prince in the kingdom of darkness. To Christ Jesus is opposed the beast, and as the Father has committed all things into the hands of his Son, so has the dragon given his power to the beast. To the Holy Ghost is opposed the false prophet, and as the Holy Ghost glorifies Christ, so the false prophet drives forward the worship of the beast." But this parallelism is not correct. Christ rather stands opposed to the dragon (comp. ch. xii. 10); Christian rulers form the contrast to the beast; and the contrast to the false prophet is found in Christian instruction and the office of witnessing (comp. ch. xi. 3, ss.) By likening the spirits to *frogs*, some respect is had, according to the just remark of Bossuet, to one of the plagues of Egypt. The point of comparison is the uncleanness, the loathsomeness, which is expressly noticed; on which account frogs in the Old Testament belong to the unclean animals, the symbols of sin in the province of beasts. The contrast between the clean and the unclean spirit cannot be more distinctly exhibited to one's view than by the image of the dove and of the frog. The croaking of the frogs can only be brought into consideration as the symptom of their unclean state, their loathsome nature. The parenthetical remark, *for there are* (that is, *exist*—the *being* in the sense of *existing*, as very commonly in John; the *for*, too, in that case quite suitable, since in order to go forth, they must first exist) *spirits of demons* (on the demons, evil spirits, see at ch. ix 20), *which do signs*, makes preparation for ver. 15, and is like an an impressive call, "Watch and pray." Nothing is better fitted, as to solve the enigma of the world's history, so

also to stir us up to watchfulness and zeal, than the conviction that we have to contend not with flesh and blood, but against evil spirits (Eph. vi. 12.) This must powerfully awaken the feeling, that if left to our own resources we are undone, and impel us to seek in the *height* help against the *depth*. In regard to the *signs*, see on ch. xiii. 14. Bengel, "They do signs, the more readily to mislead the kings. *To the kings*, whom the people will follow."—After the words, "To gather them together to the war," a *dash* is, as it were, to be introduced. The war is denoted here in respect to its final result. The *design* was a quite different one, to bring to an end the kingdom of God and his Christ and his church.[1] The *day of God* has a comprehensive character. All manifestations of God's judgment on the impious wickedness of men, are in it concentrated into one image. Bengel remarks incorrectly, "The conflict of that great day of God Almighty is afterwards described in ch. xix. where the beast and the kings of the earth and their hosts of war are actually gathered together to the battle." It is not the *entire* conflict of that great day, which is there described, but only a *single scene* of it. Another important scene, the overthrow of Rome, *precedes* it, and it is likewise to be *followed* by an important scene, the catastrophe of Gog and Magog. But it is well remarked by Bengel, "*Now* the rulers of this world have many a day, during which matters go according to their own wills in transactions of state, and negotiations respecting peace and war, but God the Almighty has his eye upon one day, which is *his*, and in which he will bring to a point his controversy with all his enemies together."

Ver. 15. *Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments, that he may not walk naked, and they may not see his shame.* That Christ is the speaker, is manifest from a comparison of ch. iii. 3, and from a reference also to the fundamental passages in the Gospels. Yet the words stand immediately connected with what precedes. The "great day of God the Almighty" is also as certainly the day of Christ, as it is

1 So already Berengaudus, an expositor of the ninth century: non quod contra deum pugnare audeant in die judicii, a quo tam terribiliter judicabuntur: sed congregabunt eos in proelium ad persequendam ecclesiam, ut in die magno Dei omnipotentis perpetua poena damnentur.

certain that the Father has committed all judgment to the Son. The allusion to the judgment, which threatens destruction to the enemies of the church, calls forth an admonition from the Lord to his own people. Whoever belongs outwardly alone to the church, but is internally united to the world, shall also be condemned with the world. Believers, too, are in the world, and the world has a troublesome ally in their hearts. When the world, therefore, rises up to fight against the Lord and against his anointed, it will be extremely difficult for them to watch, and keep their garments. In this respect a symbolical meaning may be found in the young man mentioned in Mark xiv. 51, 52, "And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him; and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked." Not merely does *fear* urge them, but also *inclination*. Nothing can here preserve them but a fixed eye directed to the coming of the Lord. We have already remarked, that the great day of the Lord is the collective result of all his judgments on the ungodly world. In the historical realization it manifests itself in an entire series of calamities. At each of them, and hence also in those, which are now proceeding before our eyes, the word, "Behold I come quickly," &c., a sort of miniature representation of the seven epistles, acquires new meaning; the letters, which in ordinary quiet times are *dark*, become then transparent.—*Clothing*, when it is used figuratively, is elsewhere usually a symbol of the *state and condition;* sinners bear filthy clothing, the justified pure, the righteous have white; comp. on ch. vii. 11. In this sense is the clothing mentioned here. The address is to Christians, so that the garments denote the *Christian state.* The world could not have been addressed so. The important thing for *it* is not to keep its garments, but to change them. The word in ch. iii. 11, "Hold that which thou hast," corresponds. Bengel, "Watch—garments. Two parts, which belong together and go together. When going to sleep one lays aside his garments, but when awake one keeps them. Now, if something suddenly happens, such as the arrival of the Lord, one who is asleep does not readily get himself clothed, but he who is in a wakeful attitude, is safe also in respect to his clothing." In the words, "that he may not walk naked, and that they may not see

his shame," (his indecorous or scandalously naked state), it is more precisely indicated wherein the blessedness consists;[1] in this, namely, that men's destitution of what constitutes a Christian state may not be exhibited before all the world, to their great disgrace and painful humiliation, ("where there is but a little modesty, nakedness is very annoying, or even quite insupportable.") How much hangs on the blessedness and the threatening here pronounced, the year 1848 has afforded many an occasion for enabling us vividly to realize. We must *beforehand* keep our garments, if we would not be *overtaken* by that coming of the Lord, which pervades all history (comp. on ch. i. 1, 7), and appear in a shameful state of nakedness. The *nakedness* here is not the guilt, but the *punishment;* by means of the judgment the nakedness, which existed already, becomes a matter of public shame. It is not the *being* naked, but the *walking* naked, that is mentioned; and the clause, "and that they may not see his shame," serves as an explanation of the *walking naked.* The detected are the naked; the seeing of the shame appears often in the Old Testament as a threatening and punishment. Thus in Isa. iii. 17, xlvii. 3, "thy nakedness shall be discovered, and thy shame seen;" Hos. ii. 10, "And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers;" Nah. iii. 5, "Behold I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame."

Ver. 16. *And he gathered them together into the place, which is called in the Hebrew Armageddon.* The subject is God the Almighty. At the close of ver. 14, every thing was already connected with the divine agency: "of that great day of God the Almighty." It was, too, God the Almighty that was substantially the subject in ver. 15. For Christ, who there announced his coming, comes in *his* name. For this reason also God must be the subject, because otherwise the overthrow of the enemies would not be placed in a determinate point of view; the close would therefore be an unsatisfactory one. We are led

1 So also the mode of coming at the blessedness is more definitely described in ch. xiv. 13, xxii. 14. The right pointing of this verse is the following: μακάριος ὁ γρηγορῶν καὶ τηρῶν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ γυμνὸς περιπατῇ καὶ βλέπωσι τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην αὐτοῦ.

to think of God as the subject also by the fundamental passage, Joel iv. 2, "And *I* gather all peoples and bring them into the valley of Jehoshaphat," (Vitringa, "the place of conflict, which Joel calls the valley of the judgment of God, the Spirit calls here Armageddon,") comp. Ezek. xxxviii. 4, xxxix. 3, where also the Lord leads the enemies of his church into his land, in order to judge them there; xxxviii. 16, "I bring him upon my land, that the heathen may know me, when I am sanctified in thee, Gog." Another subject would have required to be more definitely marked. The three unclean spirits are at too great a distance, and the verb joined to them, in ver. 14, is in the plural; they *are*. The agency cannot be ascribed, with Bengel, to the angel of the sixth vial; for the angels have nothing more assigned them, than the pouring out of the vials. Armageddon means the mountain of Megiddo. In the valley of Megiddo, Pharaoh, the type of the ungodly power of the world, had once killed the pious Josiah, who in Zech. xii. 10, 11, appears as a type of Christ, "And I pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of gracious supplication, and they look on me whom they have pierced, and they lament for him like the lamentation for an only son, and mourn for him like the mourning for the first-born. At that time there shall be a great lamentation in Jerusalem, (over Jesus, who, like Josiah, was slain by the hand of the heathen, on account of the sins of his people,) like the lamentation of Hadadrimmon in *the valley of Megiddo.*" The fact of its being God who gathers them together, does not exclude the mind of the heathen themselves, but pre-supposes it, in unison with ver. 12, where they *desired* to pass the Euphrates, and by means of the vial the Euphrates was dried up for them. *What they once accomplished there against Josiah, they would now again accomplish against Jesus;* He, the risen one, must there receive from them the stroke of death, and his church must go down with him to the grave, as formerly the theocracy was borne to the grave with Josiah. But that they shall not succeed in this, that the ancient deed of heathenish wickedness shall not be *renewed* in Armageddon, but be *avenged* (comp. 1 Kings xxi. 19, 23; 2 Kings ix. 33, ss.), is evident alone from the circumstance, that it is God, who gathers them together into this place, to which they themselves also hasten;

and still more determinately from ver. 14, by which the great day of God the Almighty breaks in at Armageddon. It makes no material difference, that here, not the valley, but the mountain of Megiddo, is mentioned, as mountain and valley are inseparably connected together, (comp. Deut. viii. 7, xi. 11.) The change was not, however, adopted merely for the sake of a better sound. Armageddon has more of strength in it, and the mountain is as natural an emblem of victory, as the valley was of defeat, (comp. Ps. xxiii. 4.)—The objection that has been raised against the reference to the death of Josiah on account of the result here being a happy one for the church, has been obviated by the remarks already made. It arises from not perceiving the *human design* that lies in the back-ground, for which the place carried an inviting aspect, as it had been the theatre of an earlier overthrow of the church and of its former head, who by name and position typified the present head. From failing to perceive this, it has often been thought, that Medgiddo comes into notice here as the place, at which Deborah and Barak gained the victory over the Canaanites. So, in particular, Bengel. But Megiddo is not mentioned there in the historical narrative; it is only in a passing way introduced in the song of Deborah (Judges v. 19.) Nor is the subject there the *valley* of Megiddo, but Taanach by the *waters* of Megiddo. Mention is made of the valley of Megiddo only in the passages which refer to the death of Josiah. Nothing properly corresponds to the valley, but the mountain, and a close relation of this sort is necessary to exclude all guesswork. Further, only some event could be referred to as having happened at Megiddo, *which had rivetted itself most deeply to the remembrance of the people of God;* so that every one would immediately think of that, as soon as he heard the name of Megiddo. Now, there can be no doubt, that the death of Josiah, as the later and more important event, would overshadow all earlier reminiscences. Zech. x. 10, 11, in particular, shews this quite plainly. This passage, besides, is expressly cited by John in his Gospel, ch. xix. 37, and in this book, ch. i. 7, an allusion is made to it. Finally, the reference to *the victory of Pharaoh* suits admirably to the Egyptian character of the whole group.—Others (Vitringa, Bengel) have conceived, on the same ground, that Megiddo is mentioned here, not with reference to any historical

fact, but in respect to its *etymology*. But such a consideration does not obviously present itself here, as it does in the case of the name, the valley of Jehoshaphat, in Joel; and the prophet would, in that event, have left us (what he never does) to uncertain conjecture. If it turned on the signification of the name, this would, as in ch. ix. 11, have been rendered also into Greek. Its being said, "which is called in the Hebrew," shews, that not simply a proper name is brought forward, that the word has an element in it, which must be explained out of the Hebrew. That no Greek explanation is appended, shews, in connection with the fact of Megiddo presenting no obvious derivation, that this Hebrew element can only stand in the syllable, Ar (the Hebr. דר); which required no explanation.[1]—The sixth vial must of necessity break off here—must stand at what immediately prepares for the final catastrophe. Otherwise, there would be no room for the seventh. With the actual irruption of the great day of God the Almighty, with the overthrow of the kings of the earth, which suddenly takes place, all—the drying up of the Euphrates, and also the fatal parole Armageddon, which announced the overthrow of Christ—all is *out*, nothing more remains as an object for the avenging severity of God. As regards the substance, it is reported in the seventh vial on this overthrow. Still, the *clothing* there is of a different description.—It is incorrectly remarked by Bengel, "Here the delineation of the conflict is broken off, which afterwards is carried out by the true and faithful one, who sits upon the white horse." The seven vials form of themselves a separate whole, and there can be no continuation of what is broken off here. Add to this, that the battle in ch. xix. 11, ss., is only a *partial* one, only a particular phase of the conflict described here, in which all the conflicts of the worldly power against Christ and his church are comprised into one whole.

Ver. 17. *And the seventh poured out his vial upon the air; and there went out a loud voice out of the temple from the throne, which said: It is done.* Bengel: "The air is, in a manner, the work-shop of lightning, etc., as also of hail, and

1 The ἑβραϊστί in the New Testament is found only in the writings of John, in the Gospel, ch. v. 2, xix. 13, 17, 20, and in the Apoc. besides here, ch. ix. 11.

even earthquakes arise from the air, mingling itself with hot vapours within the earth."—In ver. 1 merely, "a loud voice out of the temple," because there it is clear from what goes before, that the voice can be no other than the voice of God. *Here* this is rendered still more evident by the added expression, "from the throne."—From the reference to ver. 1 the expression, "it is done," receives its more definite meaning. The commission was to pour out the seven vials of God's wrath on the earth. This commission was now, after the pouring out of the seventh vial, fulfilled; for the inevitable result that was to follow, could easily be anticipated, (comp. on ch. xi. 17.) The word, "it is done," at the same time carries along with it the end of the ungodly world and its power. For, according to ch. xv. 1 the wrath of God is filled up with these seven plagues; but the completion of God's wrath pre-supposes the complete annihilation of its object. It would be a blasphemy to assert, that the wrath of God could come to an end, so long as enmity to him and his church is still upon the field. Ezekiel ix. 11 is similar, "And behold the man, who had on the linen clothing and the inkhorn by his side, answered and said, I have done, as thou commandest me."—We must not explain, It has been. For, then we should want a definite subject. We cannot think of Rome. For nothing in the whole group is as yet said of it; and that the operation of the vials does not limit itself to Rome, is evident from what follows, in which Babylon the great appears only as a particular point, which was struck by the judicial severity of God under this seal. The γέγονε occurs also in ch. xxi. 6 in the signification of: it is done. It has been, has something disagreeably sharp in it, and is more poetical than prophetical.

Ver. 18. *And there were lightnings and voices and thunders, and there was a great earthquake, such as has not been since men were upon the earth, such an earthquake so great.* We may compare ch. xi. 19, "And there were lightnings and voices and thunderings, and an earthquake and great hail" (here also ver. 21.) The seventh vial agrees exactly in its main features with the seventh trumpet. Here again we have arrived precisely at the same point at which we found ourselves there, to the discomfiture of those who could turn the whole book into a continuous representation. At the sametime, however, there is a dif-

ference between the vials and the trumpets. The particular in the vials comes more distinctly out on the ground of the general. Peculiar here are the contents of ver. 19, 20, the reference to the *God-opposing powers of the world*, while the trumpets, like the seals, have to do simply with godless *men*.—Luther follows the reading: voices and thunders and lightnings, which has arisen from an unseasonable comparison of ch. viii. 5. That the lightnings should go first is clear from what was remarked at ch. xi. 19. By the *earthquake* is denoted the shaking of the ungodly powers of the world. On the expression: such as has not been, comp. Ex. ix. 18, "a very grievous hail such as has not been in the land of Egypt since the foundation thereof, even until now;" and the properly fundamental passage, Dan. xii. 1, "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time," on which also Matt. xxiv. 21 rests. The expression in this last passage, "since the beginning of the world," serves to explain that in Daniel, "since there was a nation."[1]

Ver. 19. *And out of the great city there were made three parts, and the cities of the heathen fell. And Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give to her the cup of the wine of the wrath of his anger.* Ver. 20. *And all islands fled away, and no mountains were found.* The division of the verses is here unhappy. Ver. 19 should properly have ended with *fell.* Then each verse would have begun with the *particular*, whose fall was of especial importance in respect to the present of the Seer, and from that would have risen to the *general.* Babylon the great corresponds to the great city, and the islands and mountains correspond to the cities of the heathen. These parts, after the number of the powers that bore rule in it—the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet; to each, as it were, a part. That with the threefold division we are to suppose a complete prostration concurring, is plain from the cause that produces it, the earthquake; and also from the parallel falling which is spoken of the great city itself, in ch. xiv. 8, xviii. 2. *Two cities* have in the Revelation the name of great—Jerusalem in ch. xi. 8, and Babylon, that is Rome, in all the other passages, and very com-

[1] To the גוי in the fundamental passage (Michaelis falsely: ex quo populus tuus factus est peculiaris gens, inde ab exitu ex Ægypto), the οἱ ἄνθρωποι correspondsbetter than ἄνθρωπος, which Tischendorf prefers.

monly, ch. xiv. 8, xvii. 18, xviii. 10, 16, 18, 19, 21. It is quite incomprehensible how some expositors should understand the great city here of Jerusalem. By so doing they show that the whole import of the group of the seven vials has remained hidden from them. The object of judgment throughout that group is the heathen worldly power as opposed to God. In the preceding and following portions Babylon is so commonly called the great, that this may be regarded as a sort of proper name. On the other hand, Jerusalem is not spoken of in so broad and general a way. But what is more is, that the designation of the great city is used neither of Jerusalem nor of Babylon without some other term or description—without something in the context to indicate with certainty what precisely is meant. Hence the following expression, "and Babylon the great," must be a resumption, as otherwise the common epithet of the great would be attended only with perplexity. The pain of uncertain conjecture in the Revelation belongs only to those who voluntarily surrender themselves to it. Farther, the complete destruction that is announced here does not suit Jerusalem. In the Apocalypse Jerusalem always denotes the church (vol. i. p. 425.) But this can never become wholly degenerate and fall away; and as little can it be the subject of consuming judgments—comp. ch. xi. 13. The *cities of the heathen*—whence the *great city* can only be a *heathen* one, to the confutation of those who would understand it of *Christian* Rome. (On ἔθνη, not the nations, but the heathen, see vol. i. p. 306.) The heathen are to be regarded, according to ch. xi. 18, as full of wrath, burning with rage against the church of Christ. For the persecution of this they here receive their reward. From the connection with the great city, *the cities of the heathen* are here to be conceived as possessors of the power of the heathen world.—In the designation of Babylon as *the great* there is a reference, at the same time, to her guilt, since she had only become great through her disregard of what is just and right. That Babylon denotes *heathen* Rome has already been proved at ch. xiv. 8. The expression, "Babylon was remembered," alludes to Ps. ix. 12, "For the avenger of blood remembereth them, he forgetteth not the cry of the miserable." On the words, *to give her the cup*, etc., see on ch. xiv. 10. In the expression, *of the wrath of his anger*, which occurs also

in ch, xix. 15, the anger is the genus, and the wrath, *θυμός*, the species—the excitement—the intense feeling that appears in the energy and vigour of the mode of action. This is a necessary accompaniment of *fulness of love;* and, indeed, a want of perception in regard to the energy of divine love always goes hand in hand with a want of perception in regard to the energy of the divine righteousness in punishing. The *islands*, like the *mountains*, denote *kingdoms;* comp. on ch. vi. 14. The difference is merely this, that in the designation of kingdoms by islands respect is had only to their separate existence, while they are called mountains, in so far as they exercise dominion over others. The addition "of the heathen" in ver. 19 is to be understood also here. Along with the islands and the mountains the *sea* also has vanished. The *last* event, which is comprised in the comprehensive representation, is the destruction of Gog and Magog in ch. xx. 7—10.

Ver. 21. *And a great hail as an hundred-weight fell from heaven on the men; and the men blasphemed God upon the plague of hail, for its plague is very great.* On the hail comp. on ch. xi. 19. Instead of: as an hundred-weight, properly, as large as a talent.[1] The talent weighed between fifty and sixty pounds. They still blaspheme, therefore, dying. For this hail leaves no one in *life* who is struck by it. It brings destruction to all that had been still left to the enemies of God by the other plagues. The deadly character of the hail is clear also from this, that here no mention is made, as in the parallel passages, of their repenting of their works along with their blaspheming. They no longer have *time* to repent. But even when dying they can still blaspheme. Bengel: "The blaspheming of God had twice already been mentioned under these plagues, and along with that it was said they did not repent; but here, when the blaspheming of God is delineated the third time, no notice is taken of the other point, whether they repented or not; from which we may infer that the men were killed by this hail as the Amorites in Josh. x. 11. Men cannot receive the punishment due to this blasphemy in time. But the more on that account must we suppose a respect had to the judgment of God in eternity. We have here the end of God's judgment on the *earth*, though still not the

1 Comp. Josephus de Bel. Jud. v. 6, *ταλαντιαῖοι μὲν ἦσαν οἱ βαλλόμενοι πέτροι*, which were thrown by machines for the purpose.

end of all things." Under the seventh trumpet " the time for the dead to be judged" had also come; comp. ch. xi. 18. But this is not said in respect to the seventh vial, however nearly it otherwise touches on the seventh trumpet. For the seven vials or plagues, after the example of those of Egypt, do not alight on individuals as such, but on the powers of the world; they all, therefore, belong to the earth (comp. ch. xvi. 1.) Hence, in *this* group the wicked feeling that prompted the still unpunished blasphemy cannot be met. We are thus pointed forwards to the *following* group, at the close of which, in ch. xx. 12, ss., the dead who have not died in the Lord shall be judged according to their works. Bengel remarks, " In the midst of all, the saints, who are found among the ungodly mass, are preserved in safety. God distinguished in the plagues of Egypt between the Egyptians and the children of Israel, and a similar thing takes place in the seven vials." But we must not understand the distinction too *outwardly*. When two suffer the same thing, it is still not the same.

THE SIXTH GROUP—THE DESTRUCTION OF THE THREE ENEMIES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

(Ch. xvii.—xx.)

As the fourth group (ch. xii.—xiv.) represents the conflict of the three enemies against the Lamb and those who follow him with preliminary indications of their overthrow, so this sixth group, to which the fifth formed a sort of prelude, represents *the judgment on the three enemies.* In doing this, it does not stand merely at what is altogether general, but goes as far into detail as it could properly do without transgressing the limits which separate prophecy from history. *In many respects we have here the most important part of the book before us.* The striking clearness and accuracy with which we have here unfolded to us the most important evolutions in the history of the church, during the times which we can now long back upon, strengthens our faith in looking forward with confidence to the one event announced here, which still belongs to the *future*, ch. xx. 10.—Whoever has attained to a right apprehension of the meaning of this group, he will find it a tabernacle into which he can retreat in

tempestuous times. It is capable of affording an inexpressible rest and confidence to the soul.

The arrangement is as follows. In the representation of the conflict waged by the three enemies against Christ and his church, a descent is made from Satan down to the two beasts; but here, inversely in the representation of Christ's victory, a rise takes place from the two beasts to Satan. In the first beast, again, it rises from the destruction of the two last heads, which, in St John's time, were still present and future, the two last phases of the ungodly power of the world, in its heathen state, to the destruction of the beast itself. In the time of the Seer, the beast oppressed the church through the medium of the *sixth head*, the Roman monarchy; and through the medium of the possessor of this monarchy, the great whore, the Babylon of the then present time—Rome. The judgment of the great whore, the destruction of Rome in its property as the heathen mistress of the world, is unfolded in ch. xvii. And now the ungodly power of the world must be conducted under the directing hand of God through its *seventh* and *last* phase, which, as had already been imaged in ch. xiii., by the ten horns on the seventh head, was to possess, not a *united*, but a *divided* character, consisting of ten kings or kingdoms. These, as is said in ver. 14, by way of anticipation, were to war with the Lamb, and the Lamb was to overcome them. The overthrow of heathen Rome, which is simply and in some sharp features announced in ch. xvii., is vividly pourtrayed in ch. xviii. The prophecy as to its matter makes no advance here. The aim is only to imprint deeply in men's minds what had already been represented in ch. xvii. In ch. xix. 1—4, the whole of this first part, so important and consolatory for those who, in the time of John, were sighing under the persecutions of Rome, and struggling with her seductions, concluded by the Te Deum laudamus of the just made perfect, celebrating God's righteous judgment upon Rome.

This *first* song of praise of the heavenly church, which magnifies the grace of God contemplated as already past, is immediately followed up in ch. xix. 5—10 by a *second*, which anticipatively gives thanks for what was still to be done, even to the setting up of the kingdom of Almighty God, and the celebration of the marriage feast of the Lamb; so that it forms the introduction to all

that follows. The following portion represents how these anticipations are gradually realized. By means of the two songs of praise the whole of the group is divided into two great halves—the first containing the victory over the enemy, that at the time of the Seer pressed so hard upon the church; the second, the victory over all the other enemies.

First, in ch. xix. 12—21, in further enlargement of what was indicated in ch. xvii., we have *the victory of Christ over the ten kings*, the instruments of his judgment on Rome. Along with these, as the last phase of the *heathen worldly power*, the ten horns on the seventh *head* of the beast out of the sea, the beast himself also, the heathen state, goes down, and his tool likewise, the beast out of the earth, the false prophet, the God-opposing wisdom of the world.

Of the three enemies of the kingdom of God in ch. xiii., two now lie prostrate on the ground. Ch. xx. 1—6 represents how the third, Satan, is rendered for a time harmless. He is shut up for a thousand years in hell, and allows to the church, during that thousand years, a secure and unimperilled existence.

At the end of the thousand years opportunity is given to Satan anew for seduction; the earth again rises up against heaven; the church on all sides is heavily oppressed; but fire comes down from heaven and consumes her oppressors ("he who reads, let him understand.") Satan is for ever disarmed of his power, and the final judgment overtakes all, who during the course of time have acted in a hostile manner toward the Lord and his church, ch. xx. 7—15.

Now, since all the enemies of the kingdom of God have been brought to desolation, the opening song of praise has found its realization, the Almighty God has taken to himself the kingdom, the joyful time of the marriage of the Lamb has come, and the only thing that remains as an object for the seventh and last group is, the solemnization of this marriage.

Ch. xvii. This chapter, according to the just remark of Bengel himself, divides itself into *three parts*, marked by the angel thrice commencing his discourse with the word, *he spake*, etc.

In the first part the judgment of the great whore, that sits upon the beast with the seven heads and ten horns, is shewn. The two others give the signification of the symbol. The first treats,

as preparatory to the second, after the introduction in ver. 7, of the beast in ver. 8, of his seven heads in ver. 9—11, of the horns in ver. 12—14. The second treats of the whore and the judgment that is held upon her, ver. 15—18.

Ver. 1. *And there came one of the seven angels who have the seven vials, and spake with me and said, Come, I will shew thee the judgment of the great whore that sits upon the many waters.* Ver. 2. *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and they that dwell on the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.* That one simply of the seven angels is spoken of, without determining which, shews that the matter turns not on the personality of the angel, but only on the genus. The function being attributed to one of the angels, who have the seven vials, must point to a close connection subsisting between this sixth vision and the fifth. The judgment of the great whore, which forms the theme here, was comprehended in the seven vials. It can neither proceed alongside of them, nor follow after them. For in the last plague, which annihilated the ungodly power of the world, Babylon the great is expressly named as a chief object of the judicial energy of God (ch. xvi. 19), hence, what is said here of her judgment can only be a *more extended representation of a particular point;* and it is to indicate this relation, that one of those angels appears as the leader. It is the same angel also that shews John, according to ch. xxi. 9, the bride, the Lamb's wife. This is a simple result of his having here shewn the judgment of the great whore. There is no independent reason to be assigned. It hangs merely on the circumstance, that by the likeness of the individual showing, reference is made to the parallelism between the two women—the one of whom is brought down from the height to the depth, and the other raised up from the depth to the height. That the reason is no other than what we have stated is evident from the manifestly intentional verbal agreement of the second passage with the first, "And there came one of the seven angels, who have the seven vials, *which are full of the seven last plagues,* and spake with me, and said[1]: Come, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife; and he brought me in the Spirit to a mountain

1 The μοι, which is added in the text that Luther follows, must be spurious for this reason alone, that it is wanting in this second passage.

great and high." In every part that did not absolutely require to be changed, the agreement is quite literal, only that the seven vials are more particularly described as being "full of the seven last plagues;" because there the seven vials lay more remote.—The angels are represented here as still having the seven vials. We might explain this with Bengel on the ground that the vials were poured out, indeed, but that the angels continue to hold them in their hands, as a memorial of what has been accomplished. But, according to the *second* passage, they not only have the vials, but the vials are still also full. We must therefore explain it on the ground that what John saw, was as to the substance only a symbolical representation, and that in reality the judgment was still future. The *come*, which the angel here calls out to the church in John, is like the *come* to Lazarus in John xi. 43. It ought to place vividly before her the destruction of her enemies, and, in close connection with this, her own resurrection to new life. The judgment does not actually proceed here, as in the vials, but is only shewn.—The angel would shew John the *judgment* of the whore. John has properly to do here only with the *woman;* what he says of the beast, of his heads and horns, serves only as a foundation for what he has to say of the woman; and what is said in other respects of the woman, serves only as a preparation for the judgment. The judgment is the proper theme. In perfect correspondence with this is the circumstance of John being presently led away into the wilderness.[1]—The judgment is here already shewn to the Seer, and not, as some have supposed, first in ch. xviii. He sees immediately in ver. 3 the woman in the wilderness, and obtains the explanation in ver. 16, that thereby her *desolation* is denoted.—Why Babylon or Rome is called the great whore—viz., on account of her selfishness concealing itself behind the appearance of love, on account of the diplomatical and deceitful arts, by which she strove to extend her dominion—is clear from what is said at ch. xiv. 8, "She is fallen, Babylon the great, who has made all the heathen drink of the wrath of the wine of her fornication." The impropriety of comparing the passages in which apostacy from God ap-

[1] Several, and even Bengel, have sought in vain to press upon κρίμα another signification; it corresponds to משפט in Jer. li. 9, comp. ch. xviii. 8: ἰσχυρὸς κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ κρίνας αὐτήν, ver. 10: ἡ κρίσις σου.

pears under the figure of fornication, was perceived by Vitringa, who, however, made no farther use of this perception. Babylon still appears standing, and in ch. xvi. 9 is called the great. There can be no doubt that an internal connection must subsist between the greatness of the whore and the greatness of Babylon; the rather so, as in ch. xiv. 8, the greatness of Babylon is brought into remembrance with her fornication. If the fornication denotes cunning policy, then the being great in that implies being great in general: the great whore is at the sametime the great mistress of the world. From the whole connection it turns here, not upon a moral property alone, but also upon the great *power* which must be brought to an end by the judgment. That the theme here is the *judgment* of the great whore, implies that her doing, her *guilt* had already been treated of at length in the preceding portion. The brief indication in ch. xiv. 8 is not sufficient, the less so, as there also the guilt was mentioned only in a passing way, as a reason for the threatened punishment. We must therefore seek for the representation of the guilt in ch. xiii. *There,* in ver. 3—8, are described the severe persecutions, which the Roman power, the sixth head of the beast, inflicts on the church. The great whore is only so far different from the sixth head, as this head denotes the Roman power, while the whore is the city of Rome—"the great city, which has dominion over the kings of the earth," (ver. 18,) in which that power concentrates itself. Substantially, therefore, a report is there given of the misdeeds of Rome.—*The whore's sitting upon the many waters* also is presupposed as a thing that must be known from what precedes, and must, therefore, in substance, be contained there. It is enough to compare ch. xiii. 3, "and the whole earth wondered after the beast;" ver. 7, "and there was given to it power over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation," ver. 12—16. From ver. 15 it seems impossible to doubt, that *many waters*, when used without anything additional, is equivalent to *many peoples*. It is said there, "the waters, which thou sawest, where the whore sits, are peoples and multitudes, and nations and tongues." But in opposition to this view a twofold consideration presents itself. First, that the figure can scarcely be justified as characteristic. Bengel, indeed, remarks, "There is a great similarity when a great multitude of people is represented by many waters. Great

waters have something powerful in them, and make a mighty *noise;* as do also many people when they are assembled together. At annual fairs, in loyal acclaims, and on other occasions, when multitudes *raise their voices together*, they then become like *resounding* waters." But the words marked in *italics* show that Bengel must first have thrown out of view the point of comparison. The many waters might also have been at *rest.* The second consideration is this, that waters elsewhere, in the symbolical language of Scripture, are an image of *prosperity*, of a happy and flourishing condition—so for example, Hos. xiii. 15, "it dries up his spring and desiccates his brook, he (the enemy) plunders his treasure, all glorious possessions." (See my Comm. on Ps. cvii. 33—34.) That it is used specially in this sense in the Revelation, comp. on ch. viii. 10, xvi. 4, and in the Old Testament in regard to ancient Babylon; so, in particular, in the properly fundamental passage, Jer. li. 13, "Thou who dwellest beside many waters art rich in *treasures*," where the second part of the verse is an explanation of the first, and forms the foundation of Babylon's natural fulness of water. So, too, ch. l. 38, "Drought upon her waters, that they dry up," which is immediately preceded by the words, "Sword upon her treasures, and they are plundered." Isa. xliv. 27, "Who says to the deep, Be dry, and and I will dry up thy streams." Ps. cvii. 33—34, where it is said, in reference to Babylon, "He changes streams into deserts, and water springs into dry land; a fruitful land into salt-heath, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants," *q. d.* he causes the waters of Babylon's well-being and prosperity to become dry. We may, therefore, suppose, that in the explanation given in ver. 15, the peoples, etc. are brought into view only in respect to the advantage, which they yield to the mistress of the world; and that it is this advantage, which properly is imaged by water; as also Nineveh (in Nah. ii. 9, "Nineveh is like a water-pond,") is compared to a pond of water, merely on account of the advantage which it derived from the concourse of men: the contrast is formed by the *plundering* in ver. 10. That the *sitting* here is not equivalent to being *enthroned*, but to *dwelling*, according to the Hebrew usage, (comp. ch. xiv. 6), appears from the fundamental passage, Jer. li. 13. We may explain: *upon*, or *by* many waters; either way she appears as the possessor of waters.—When

the commerce with kings in ver. 2 is represented as *fornication*, the point of comparison is the making herself agreeable, showing feigned love for the sake of her own interest—comp. on ch. xiv. 8. Rome, according to ver. 1, is "the great whore," that allures the kings into this commerce, as it is said of Tyre in Isa. xxiii. 17, "She commits fornication with all the kingdoms of the earth;" but the behaviour of the kings themselves is also of a whorish nature. Rome whores with the kings, in order to bring them under her dominion; the kings whore with Rome, making hypocritical professions of their love and devotedness, in order to find their servitude tolerable.—That the inhabitants of the earth have *been made drunk by the wine of her fornication*, indicates, that she had rendered the whole world helpless and miserable by her artful policy, and had laid it at her feet; comp. on ch. xiv. 8.

Ver. 3. *And he brought me into a wilderness in the Spirit. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet coloured beast, that was full of names*[1] *of blasphemy, and had seven heads and ten horns.*—That the wilderness is an image of the state into which the woman was to be brought, is plain from the explanation in ver. 16; comp. xviii. 2, 16. Then, the corresponding expression, *the judgment* (of condemnation) in ver. 1; the theatre merely points to the judging, the rest is represented by the *subject* of the judgment. So that if we do not refer the words "into a wilderness" to the approaching *desolation*, the promise of the angel to shew the (condemnatory) judgment of the great whore would remain unfilfilled. We are led to the same result by the contrast of the great and high mountain in ch. xxi. 10. And, finally, all doubt is removed by the fundamental passages of the Old Testament. In Jer. l. and li. the threatening constantly returns, that ancient Babylon should be turned into a wilderness. In Isa. xxi. 1, Babylon, on account of the approaching desolation, is called the *desert of the sea*. (See Christology II. p. 98.) What is said here of Babylon, holds substantially in respect to every worldly power that is opposed to God, and treads in her footsteps. Continually is the church called anew to stand unmoved amid the proud tri-

1 γέμον ὀνόματα. In the Rev. also, γέμω is usually construed with the genitive. In the Hebr. constr. here, and in ver. 4 with the accusative, the copyists lost themselves. (In ver. 4 the Hebr. and Greek construction are combined together). Hence the different readings.

umphs of that power, and allow herself to be carried by the Spirit into the wilderness, to see there with the eye of the Spirit the ruin that lies hidden behind the greatness.—In regard to being *in the Spirit*, comp. on ch. iv. 2.—That the subject is not *the* woman, but *a* woman, not *the* beast, but *a* beast, is to be explained on the ground, that the Seer describes what he *saw*. It is otherwise in ver. 1. There the subject of discourse is the great whore. It is a strange question to put, whether the beast here is identical with that in xiii. 1. It proceeds from entirely overlooking the relation of the two groups to each other. The allusion to ch. xiii., which one misses, is only *formally* wanting, as appears from the reasons already mentioned. The beast is here indicated in a quite cursory manner, and in terms that bespeak the closest connexion with ch. xiii.; so that we are thence to borrow what is needed. This close interconnexion supplies the place of a distinct allusion. Here the Seer has not to do with the *beast*, but with the *woman, who sits upon the beast*, and indeed more especially with the judgment that is to be passed upon her.—The woman's sitting upon the beast brings those who have taken up a false view of the beast, into no small perplexity. If we understand by the beast heathen Rome, or if we understand by it the papacy, the sitting of the woman on the beast cannot be explained but with the greatest arbitrariness. If, with Bossuet, who follows the former of these views, we identify the beast and the woman ("St John clearly explains that the beast and the woman are at bottom but the same thing, and that both the one and the other is Rome with its empire")—a supposition that in itself alone is extremely violent—how then can the woman sit upon the beast? Bengel, who adopted the second explanation, understands by the woman the city Rome, which will free itself from the dominion of the Pope. But, apart from all the other considerations which oppose this interpretation, at the moment, when Rome vindicates her freedom from the Papal dominion, she ceases to be the great whore in the sense of Bengel. On the other hand, if the beast is the ungodly power of the world in general, it was quite natural, that Rome, the possessor of that at the time of the prophet, should appear sitting on the beast.—The woman sits upon a *scarlet coloured* beast. As a *moral* qualification is denoted by the beast, godlessness (ch. xiii. 1), it is most natural to regard the

epithet also as indicative of a moral quality; the more so as the mention of names of blasphemy immediately follows. Scarlet colour is employed as being the colour of blood. It is used so in Isa. i. 18, and also in the symbolism of the law. (See my Egypt and the Books of Moses, p. 182.) With the godlessness hatred toward true piety goes hand in hand. To the scarlet coloured beast the *red* dragon in ch. xii. 3 corresponds. In this chapter we have a correspondence in ver. 6, where the prophet sees the woman drunk with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus, (comp. ch. xiii. 7, 10, 15.) In opposition to those, who with an appeal to ver. 4 would understand the *scarlet coloured* of the royal pomp and glory, there is this farther consideration, that here the beast itself is described as scarlet coloured, whereas in ver. 4 the *apparel* is spoken of. This plainly implies, that by the scarlet coloured here a *quality* is denoted, a blood-thirsty disposition, and not a *property*.—In regard to the *names of blasphemy*, names by which the glory is usurped that belongs to God and his Son, see on ch. xiii. 1.

Ver. 4. *And the woman was clothed with purple,*[1] *and scarlet colour, and gilded with gold and precious stones and pearls, and had a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations, and of the filthinesses*[2] *of her fornication.* The apparel and the adorning of the woman is significant of *the rich and proud pomp of a sovereign*, comp. ch. xviii. 12, 16, and Ezek. xxviii. 13, where Tyre is radiant with gold and gems. In regard to the *golden cup*, comp. at ch. xiv. 8, and the fundamental passage quoted there, Jer. li. 7, "The golden cup of Babylon is in the hand of the Lord," etc. From this passage, and from the standing use of the figure of the cup, (comp. on ch. xiv. 8,) the cup can only be filled with what renders those, to whom it is given, *helpless*. The abominations and impurities are the wine of the cup. The point of comparison is the *overpowering*, the casting to the ground, the reducing to a state of *impotence*. Hence, we cannot think of the abominations of idolatry, but only of *political enor-*

[1] Comp. with the ἦν περιβεβλημένη πορφυροῦν, John xix. 2: καὶ ἱμάτιον πορφυροῦν περιέβαλον αὐτόν, while Matth. in ch. xxvii. 28 has: περιέθηκαν αὐτῷ χλαμύδα κοκκίνην.

[2] τὰ ἀκάθαρτα, the accus. after the Heb. idiom, in order to avoid the threefold genitive.

mities. The additional expression, "of her fornication," might hold either way. But fornication can only mean love-feigning policy, according to the usage of the Revelation. The abominations and filthinesses, therefore, are *the shameful transactions of that artful policy, by which Rome reduced the nations to a state of utter impotence.*[1] That the cup is *golden* points, in accordance with what precedes, to the *glory* of the person who has it, and who presents it to the nations, that they may drink of it.

Ver. 5. *And on her forehead a name written: mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth.* The name, which she has written on her forehead, is not a title, which she takes to herself, but *the expression of her nature.* The name consists of a whole sentence, and substantially, though not formally, ver. 6 also belongs to it.—On mystery, secret, see at ch. i. 20, x. 7. It was there shewn that the notion of mystery is that of a matter lying absolutely beyond the reach of the common, the natural understanding. In what respects, then, was Babylon a mystery? It was so precisely by its greatness, as still continuing after the appearance of Christ, and also pressing with frightful weight upon his confessors; comp. with ver. 6, which stands in close connection with the one before us. The secret is *told*, ver. 7, or discovered, through the announcement, that this greatness is not, as the natural mind fondly imagines, an *abiding* one; but is destined to an entire destruction. To the secret here corresponds the great wondering of the seer in ver. 6. An end comes at the same time to the mystery and the wondering. The conflict, which the "mystery" of the prosperity of the wicked awakens in the souls of believers, is most vividly pourtrayed in Ps. lxxiii. The victory and the unveiling of the mystery is attained there, by the Psalmist recovering himself from his error, and going into the sanctuary of God, where alone an insight can be obtained into the secrets, with which the natural understanding labours in vain, (ver. 16, 17.) The solution of the mystery there, too, is found by "marking their end." According to the common supposition, the word *mystery* points, it is thought, to the circumstance, that

1 The word βδέλυγμα is used of all actions of a shocking nature in Lev. xviii. 27; comp. Luke xvi. 15, ὅτι τὸ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὑψηλὸν, βδέλυγμα ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ; in this book, ch. xxi. 27, καὶ οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ ποιοῦν βδέλυγμα καὶ ψεῦδος.

by Babylon is meant, not the ancient city bearing that name, but Rome. This, however, would be no mystery in the Scripture sense; it is at most but an enigma, and no longer even that, after the composition of the first epistle of Peter.—The predicate of Babylon *the great*, refers to "the wide circumference of the city," only in so far as that represented the vast extent of her territory. Thus it appears, that "the great," and "the mother of harlots," etc., are very closely connected together, and that we are not, with Bengel, to make out the relation thus: "*beside her greatness*, she is also called, on account of her internal spiritual constitution, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth."—*The mother of harlots*, as much as the great whore in ver. 1; the arch-harlot, she who practises through the widest bounds, a policy the most cunning and destructive to the nations. All, who practise the same within narrower bounds, are, as it were, her daughters. The abominations here also can only be political enormities. Under these are comprehended what she did against the church. For, the root of her conduct in that respect was not false religious zeal, but *despotism*. In ver. 6, this is still more explicitly brought out.

Ver. 6. *And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And I wondered very much when I saw her.* The witnesses of Jesus, according to ch. xi. 3, where the Lord speaks of his witnesses, are not those, who testify *of* Jesus, but those who belong to him, as also the testimony of Jesus is always the testimony which belongs to him, (comp. on ch. i. 2, 9, vi. 9.) We can suppose, that the witnesses of Jesus are not personally different from the saints, but that only by means of a rise that quality in the slain is brought out to view, which makes the mystery still more impenetrable, still heightens the guilt of Rome. They had been killed in their very service—not in spite of, but on *account* of their confession. How is it possible that God could look quietly on at this? But we may also suppose that the witnesses of Jesus are the more prominent part of the whole—not those, who generally delivered a good confession, but such as in the strictest sense filled the office of witnessing, the witnesses by profession. It is in favour of this latter view, that in ch. xviii. 21, as here the saints and the witnesses of Jesus, so there the *prophets* and

the saints are connected together; that in ch. xix. 10, "to have the testimony of Jesus," is explained by "having the spirit of prophecy;" that also in ch. xi. 3, the two witnesses step forth at once in the act of *prophesying*, not representing Christians generally, but the *teaching office;* and, finally, that in ch. xi. 18, and the other passages quoted in our exposition there, Christians are divided into *two classes*, prophets and saints, the great and the small. The *first* place among the witnesses, according to ch. xviii. 20, is held by the *apostles*.—The wondering of John corresponds on the one side to the designation of Babylon as a *mystery* in ver. 5, as quite manifestly appears from ver. 7, "wherefore wonderest thou? I will shew thee the mystery." Accordingly, *the mystery of the woman must be the object of wonder*. If it should continue to abide in its greatness notwithstanding its fearful guilt, only this could be an object of wonder to the Seer. On the other side, there is a manifest correspondence between the wonder of the Seer, and the wonder of those whose names are not written in the book of life, mentioned in ver. 8. Now, if the object of wondering to the latter is the power of the beast, that seemed to remain still unimpaired after Christ, we shall not be warranted in inferring from the wonder of the Seer, that he did not know what to make of the woman (Züllig, "the prophet's perplexity, who knew not what it meant.") Ch. xiii. 3 is also to be compared, "And I saw one of his heads as slain to death, and the stroke of his death was healed. And the whole earth wondered after the beast." The object there of the astonished wondering is the heathen, and specially the Roman power appearing still unbroken after Christ had come. Bengel: "John nowhere else speaks of himself as being seized with wonder, excepting that he calls the seven angels with the seven last plagues a wonderful sign. There must, therefore, have been something singularly fitted to astonish about the woman." That description of the angels with the seven vials, as a sign great and wonderful, stands in a certain correspondence with the wondering of John upon the woman. The judgment on the beast, the whore, is, as it were, the counter-wonder to the beast, the whore herself.

Ver. 7. *And the angel spake to me, wherefore dost thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the*

beast, that bears her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. The question, wherefore wonderest thou? corresponds to that, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matth. xiv. 31.) *It is the accusation against human nature in John, which is always rivetted to the visible.* John would not have wondered if his mind had been alive to the sayings, "How are they brought to desolation as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors;" tolluntur in altum ut lapsu graviore ruant. Such sayings are indeed easily spoken, when the overthrow of the gigantic mischief has already been accomplished, but by no means so, when its power still exists in undiminished force. The *wherefore* shews, that the wondering is a groundless, or foolish one. It is said of Jesus in Mark vi. 6, "And he wondered because of their unbelief." That wondering of Jesus corresponds to the wondering here.[1]—The mystery of the whore is, *that she is made desolate;* the mystery of the beast, *that it goes into perdition.* The mystery of the beast is indicated here rather than fully disclosed (this being reserved for ch. xix. 20, where the beast is represented as being cast into the lake of fire); it is unfolded only in so far as is necessary, to set in its proper connection what is said of the whore. According to ch. xvii. 1, we have properly to do only with the judgment on the great whore. In this judgment the whole runs out. What is said in ver. 10, 11, of the destruction of the beast generally, serves only to give a brief survey of the whole circumstances. That the chief object is the judgment on the whore, is clear alone from this, that the beast is mentioned only in the second place. The subject of the whore is immediately and wholly disposed of; but in regard to the further treatment of the beast, a general sketch merely is given, which is afterwards completed — The subject of the beast is handled in ver. 8, of his seven heads in ver. 9—11, of his ten horns in ver. 12—14, of the whore in ver. 15—18, which verses shew, that what is said of the beast, was necessary as a foundation for that which was to be said of the woman. That the chief subject is discussed in ver. 15—18, is expressly indicated by the new beginning, ("And he spake to me.")

1 The rare θαυμάζειν διά τι also in John vii. 21.

Ver. 8. *The beast which thou sawest, was and is not, and shall ascend out of the abyss, and go into perdition; and they that dwell upon the earth shall wonder, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that it was, and is not, and again shall be present.* The beast *was,* it held its being upon earth, so long as the dominion of Satan as the prince of this world was unbroken. By what his *not being* was accomplished, appears from ch. xiii. 3, "And I saw one of his heads as killed to death." As the *deadly* wound there, so here the corresponding *not being* must have its ground in the atonement of Christ. Further, if it is Christ who puts an end to the beast's coming again out of the abyss and his resumed existence on the earth (comp. ver. 14, xix. 11, ss., especially ver. 20), in him also must its *not being* have its cause. The *not being* is also to be regarded as continuing during the coming again and renewed being. This appears from ver. 11, where the whole duration of the beast is denoted by the two stages of having been and of not being.—On the *abyss,* that is, hell, see on ch. ix. 1. Mention was already made in ch. xi. 7, of the beast's ascending from thence, "the beast, that ascendeth out of the abyss shall make war on them." See on the *ascending* at ch. xiii. 1. That the "it *shall* (is going to) ascend," and the corresponding, "it shall again be," had a *foundation* in the *present,* and that an *increase* only belongs to the *future,* is manifest from all that was said regarding the time of the composition of the Apocalypse, as one in which there was an organized bloody persecution against the Christians. An *absolute future* cannot be intended, otherwise John would not have been on the island of Patmos. How little the future excludes the present, is shown by the "shall worship," in ch. xiii. 8, compared with "they wondered," in ver. 3. Compare also on the words, "was and is not, and shall ascend out of hell," the remarks already made at p. 81. *Perdition* is used here of perdition in the full sense, the perdition of hell. The beast goes to "its own place;" what comes out of hell, goes to hell. Of the perdition of hell, perdition is also used in John xvii. 12, where Judas is called the son of perdition, corresponding to the child of hell in Matth. xxiii. 15, and it is also found in 2 Thess. ii. 3, comp. i. 9. We have a commentary in ch. xix. 20, "they were

both cast alive into the lake of fire, that burneth with fire and brimstone." It is plain, from ver. 11, that the perdition of hell is meant. (The reading *ὑπάγει* for *ὑπάγειν* is from ver. 11.)—On the words, "and they shall wonder—from the foundation of the world," comp. ch. xiii. 8, "And all shall worship it that dwell on the earth, whose names are not written in the book of life, of the Lamb that was slain, from the foundation of the world."[1] Bengel remarks, "At both places the highest thought, that, namely, of *election*, is brought in to meet the great temptation."—As the second, *was and is not*, corresponds to the first, so the *and shall again be present*, corresponds to, *shall ascend outof the abyss*. It is not said, *shall be*, but, *shall be present* (da seyn wird.)[2] The wound was an absolutely mortal one, as will be shewn by the end. It comes again out of the abyss, from which it derives, as it were, its last power, but only as a kind of spectre.—The emphasis rests on the expression, *again shall be present, q.d.*, when they see, that the beast, which was and is not, again shall be there. The reading *καίπερ ἐστίν*, "although it still is," which Luther follows, is to be rejected. It gives, properly, no right sense. By it the wondering must turn upon the *not being;* for the being would only be incidentally noticed; although it is, cannot signify as much as, and still is. But ch. xiii. 4 is against it, as there only a wondering of astonishment can be meant, such gaping admiration as a lost world feels toward the beast. So also here, ver. 6, by which the wondering can only refer to the *power* of the beast. And, lastly, the correspondence between the "again shall be present," and "shall ascend," is decisive against this reading, which is at any rate badly supported, and on external grounds also is deserving of rejection.[3]

1 Here there is omitted merely the *τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου*. There it is *ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ*, here *ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον*. These other deviations should lead us to prefer also the reading *ὀνόματα*. The *τὸ ὄνομα*, which certainly has important authorities on its side has probably flowed from the parallel passage.

2 Bengel: ad *ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστι, καὶ πάρεσται* aptissime adsonat, et minus quiddam dicit, quam si diceretur *καὶ ἔρχεται* vel *καὶ ἔσται*.

3 Add to this still, that to the fut., *πάρεσται* the fut. *θαυμάσονται* corresponds, then the *μέλλει ἀναβαίνειν*. Further, that the *καίπερ* never occurs elsewhere in the Apocalypse, and that, where it does occur in the N. T and in classical Greek, it is coupled with the part. not with the verb fin.: (See Bleek on Hebr. v. 8.)—The reading of several MSS. *καὶ πάρεστιν* is only another attempt to get rid of the difficulty arising from this that the Seer, writing from his own standing point, uses the fut.: when they see that it again shall be present, for, shall see, that it again is present.

Ver. 9. *Here belongs the understanding, that has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits, and are seven kings.* The *here belongs* is properly *here is*, meaning that wisdom here has its right place, and intimating that a problem is presented here, which it is the province of the more profound spiritual insight to handle; comp. on ch. xiii. 18. That the mountains are to be understood spiritually is evident alone from ch. xiii. 3, where it is said that one of the heads was killed to death, which does not suit a natural mountain (as the seven hills of Rome, of which so many expositors think here.) Then ver. 3 is to be compared, in which the woman is described as *sitting on a scarlet-coloured beast.* To this manifestly corresponds the sitting on the mountains here. If by the first Rome is denoted, as the holder of the world's power, then the sitting upon the mountains will also have the same meaning. In the symbolical language of Scripture, and especially of the Revelation, mountains signify *kingdoms.* That they have this signification also here, is plain from the term "seven kings," or kingdoms, added by way of explanation. The seven phases of the ungodly power of the world were definitely marked at ch. xiii. 1. And from the remarks already made, the seven hills of Rome could only be pointed to as a symbol of the seven-formed worldly power. —That the kings here are not individuals, but ideal persons, personified *kingdoms*, is clear alone from the corresponding expression: mountains. For these denote, not single rulers, but kingdoms. In ver. 12 also kings stand for kingdoms. That the heads of the beast here are called *kings* is decisive against the opinion which considers the beast to be the papacy. The horns, likewise expressly mentioned, must, according to Bengel, be "worldly kings," while he would regard the heads as "seven diverse popes succeeding each other;" though it is quite clear, that if in the former case worldly kingdoms or monarchies are spoken of, it must be these also in the latter.

Ver. 10. *Five are fallen, one is, the other is still not come, and when he comes, he must abide a short time.* Of the seven kings mentioned *five* belong to the period already past; and of the two others *one* appeared at the time then present on the stage of history, and the *other* had still not entered on it. The *falling* denotes the overthrow of the kingdoms; comp. ch. xviii. 2, "She

is fallen, she is fallen, Babylon the great," ch. xiv. 8. The five kings or worldly kingdoms that had already fallen at the time of the Seer, are the kings of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece. The *one that is*, accordingly, must be the sixth great monarchy, the Roman, for it was this which was in existence at the time of the Seer. The *being* denotes here, not being simply by itself, but only in contrast to the being fallen, the being *as king*. Otherwise, a contradiction would be presented to ver. 8, 11, where the *not being* of the beast is affirmed. With the beast the power also of this sixth head is broken. It was precisely this sixth head which received the deadly wound. Bengel: "This one king, however impotent he may be, is still not off the stage. If he indeed were not, the continued duration of the beast, from his ascending out of the sea to his precipitation into the lake of fire, would thereby be interrupted. The beast is no longer what it was, but it has still not gone into destruction. The one king does not stand as the five preceding kings stood before their *fall;* he is, as he even now can be, in the *non esse* of the beast, which was represented before. The Lord said, "I have overcome the world." In that lies the foundation of the difference between the one and the five.—When the other is come, then the *sixth falls*, that is now the king of Rome. But from the statement made respecting the *seventh*, that he shall abide but a *short time*, we infer, that with the one then being it was likely to continue still a pretty long time, and that by means of it the church should be for a considerable period exercised in patience.—That the kings are ideal persons, there can for this reason be no doubt, that the seventh king is represented here in ver. 12 as a compound of ten kings. *He has not yet come*, because his time has not yet arrived, (John vii. 8; comp. ver. 6, viii. 20.) When it is said that he shall remain only a short time, the subject is not the continuance of the seventh generally, but the duration of the seventh power as a God-opposing one. To the declaration here, "he must abide a short time," corresponds in ver. 12 the statement, "as kings they receive power one hour with the beast." How an end is put to his abiding is represented in ch xix. 11, ss.

Ver. 11. *And the beast, which was and is not, he is an eighth, and is of the seven, and goes into perdition.* The words, "which was and is not," do not serve as a personal designation, but form

the basis of that which was to be declared in respect to the destiny of the beast. If it has received its death-blow from the atonement of Christ, if its existence from that time is only an apparent one—if, with all its swaggering, it is but a bloodless spectre—its end can only be palpable *destruction*.—The destruction of the beast, with all that belongs to it, is the proper theme of the whole group. It was only destruction that was spoken of in what immediately precedes: five have already fallen; the one that is, must fall; the seventh, that had not yet come, is to continue but a short time. So that at the words, "is an eighth," there naturally suggests itself to be supplied, "in destruction."—If there stood merely, "he is of the seven," it would be natural to suppose, that he personally belonged to the seven, (Acts xxi. 8); as it is decidedly against the manner of the Revelation of John, to put forth enigmas for the solution of which it does not itself provide the means, and to leave space to uncertain conjecture. But as the words "is an eighth" precede, the relation to the seventh is withdrawn from the *personal* sphere, and by the connection limited to the *manners* or the *issue*. In the present case it must be the latter, as in what precedes all has respect to the destruction of the parties in question. But every doubt is removed by the appended statement, "and goes into perdition," *q.d.*, and like the seven, or with the seven, the beast goes also into perdition. *With the seventh phase of the ungodly power of the world itself also ceases, the heathen state generally comes to an end.*—We have a commentary on what is meant here in ch. xix. 11—21. There the conflict of the seventh head or king against the kingdom of God is delineated. In this conflict, according to ver. 20, 21, the beast also is comprehended, and is cast into the lake of fire (corresponding to the *perdition*), whereas before the beast *survived* its particular heads, and soon appeared again on the stage of conflict with a new head.—From the interpretation now given every thing in this verse refers to the destruction of the beast. The current exposition is quite different. It finds the announcement here, that after the seven heads of the beast the personal antichrist shall appear. But the following reasons oppose this view. If the beast were a proper independent power, *along with* and *after* the seven heads, then, what was to be said on it, would not belong to this portion,

where the author is dealing merely with the seven heads. At all events, it must still be made the subject of discourse elsewhere in its proper place. Further, if it is certain that ver. 9—11 treat of the heads of the beast, this verse cannot contain anything properly new; it can only bring clearly and distinctly out, what had already been indirectly contained in the preceding part. If the heads of the beast are only seven, then it is self-evident, that with the seventh head the beast itself goes to destruction. For, without a head the beast can have no existence. Then, those who understand antichrist here by the beast, fall into either of two equally untenable suppositions. One party, with Vitringa at their head, feign an eighth head, without any foundation for it in the text, and against the express limitation of the heads to the number seven. How should it be possible, that exactly the mightiest and most frightful head in the whole assemblage of heads should have been omitted? The other party have Bengel on their side, who remarks, "The beast consists, as it were, of eight pieces. The seven heads are for themselves, and the eighth piece is the corpus, or the whole body, and, therefore, the beast itself (ch. xi. 7) with his feet, mouth, etc." But the beast cannot be thought of as existing without its head. The mouth belongs to the head, as that with which it blasphemes, the teeth as that with which it tears. As formerly the heads were not without the body, so now the body cannot be without the head. At any rate it would be, not an increase to the frightfulness, but a diminution of it. Bengel himself felt this, and in a very artificial way sought still to vindicate for the eighth a head, the seventh, though after every effort it always remains, that by it the body of the beast is denoted as the beast in contradistinction from the heads. This, too, decides against the interpretation respecting the antichrist, that what was above all to be said of him, his horrid and savage procedure, his "fathomless wickedness and power," must be added by these expositors at their own hand. Bengel's soul was conscious of this. He says, "One might suppose, that in this prophecy there is scarcely enough said of the things, which this adversary will do." He thinks the mere indication enough, as elsewhere this doing was described at sufficient length. But it has already been shewn, (p. 87.) that the New Testament elsewhere also knows nothing of a per-

sonal antichrist. Finally, the words, "and goes into perdition," resume with intentional literality the "and go into perdition" in ver. 8. Now, if the beast there is the whole of the worldly power as opposed to God, it cannot denote antichrist here as an individual. The identity with ver. 8 is clear from the "was and is not," which itself also does not suit a personal antichrist. For such had not been before.

Ver. 12. *And the ten horns, which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have not as yet received kingdoms; but they shall receive power as kings one hour with the beast.* The angel turns now from the heads to the *horns*. The beast, according to ver. 7, has ten horns. It would be a monster if it had these in any other place than where *all* beasts have them, where the Lamb also has them, according to ch. v. 6, on the *head*. But if they could exist only on one of the heads, it is impossible to think of any but the *seventh*. For this is what was spoken of in the preceding context, at the close of ver. 10, and also in ver. 11. We are led also to the same result by comparing the words, "which have not as yet received a kingdom," with those in ver. 10, "the other is not yet come;" also by comparing the "one hour" here, with "the must abide a short time" there. See the proof for the horns being held to be on the seventh head at p. 77. The seventh phase of the ungodly power of the world, which is denoted by the ten horns on the seventh head, is to be a divided one, in contradistinction to all the earlier ones, in contradistinction especially to the sixth, the Roman—as a proof, that the Revelation is really what its name imports, and did not owe its origin to a conjecture formed after the analogies of the past.—The horns, it is said, are *kings*. That we are not to think of *individual kings*, is plain from the whole character of the Apocalypse, *which never has to do with single human individuals, but everywhere represents the future only in its most general features*. The designation by horns alone leads not to individuals, but to *powers*. For the horn is the symbol of power, victorious strength—comp. on ch. v. 6, xiii. 1. Further, in the fundamental passage of Daniel, in ch. vii., the ten horns are the ten kingdoms, into which the fourth great monarchy, the Roman, was to fall.[1] So also in Dan. viii. 8, Zech. ii. 1, powers, or monarchies are

[1] What comes out of the interpretation, that finds the papacy here, may be gathered

denoted by horns. Ver. 9 here shews, that we are not to think of individual kings. And if kings are kingdoms there, they must also have the same signification here.[1] The number *ten* of kings or kingdoms as a *round* one itself shews, that there were not to be quite exactly and definitely ten, but that it is enough, if the different possible reckonings move somewhere about that number. Matters stand otherwise with the horns than with the heads. The heads denote *world-monarchies*, of which there was always but one at a time on the theatre. If the numbering is such as to admit of no license, then the whole number must necessarily be a *determinate* one. But, in opposition to this, the horns denote a constellation of powers, existing independently beside each other. And since it must be doubtful in regard to individuals, whether their independence was so complete, their importance so great, as that they should have a place assigned them in the series, the boundaries must be of a somewhat fluctuating nature.[2] The word *kingdom* is used here in an *active* sense, of the government, the kingly rule and authority—see on ch. xvi. 10. We are not to explian *a* kingdom, but rather: which had not yet received kingdom

from this, that Vitringa on that ground denies the correspondence between the ten horns here and the ten horns in Daniel, ch. vii.—See on this correspondence at ch. xiii. 2.

1 Vitringa mentions, that the sense of kingdoms is the natural and obvious one: "no one could expect, that single kingdoms of various nations should arise in the world, should set up each single kings, and after these should immediately go to ruin."

2 The ten horns and kingdoms were explained with substantial correctness by Berengaudus in the 9th century, Expos. in Apoc. in the works of Ambros, T. vii. Ed. Ven. 1781, p. 334: Quatuor bestae Danieli in visione demonstratae sunt, per quas quatuor regna figurabantur: quarta autem bestia, quae erat fortis atque terribilis, per quam Romani designati sunt, decem cornua habuisse describitur, per quae ea regna, quae Romanum imperium destruxerunt, designata sunt. Eandem itaque significationem habent decem cornua in hoc loco; significant quippe ea regna, per quae imperium Romanum destructum est. Partem namque Asiae per se (l. Persae) primitus abstulerunt: postea vero Saraceni totam subegerunt: Vandali Africam sibi vindicaverunt, Gothi Hispaniam, Lombardi Italiam, Burgundiones Galliam, Franci Germaniam, Hunni Panoniam: Alani autem et Suevi multa loca depopulati sunt, quae eorum subjacebant ditioni. The unsuitable mixture that is found here of the Persians and Saracens, who did not belong with the others to one conjunct state of things, which yet was required by the oneness of the seventh head, has been avoided by Bossuet, who also has some excellent remarks in regard to the number ten: "There appeared much about the same time Vandals, Huns, Franks, Burgundians, Suevi, Alani, Heruli, to whom succeeded Lombards, Germans, Saxons: more than all these the Goths, who were the real destroyers of the empire. We need not torment ourselves about bringing them precisely to the number ten; although it might be possible to reduce them almost to so many fixed kingdoms. But one of the secrets in the interpretation of the prophets, is not to seek after *finesse*, where it is not to be found, and to lose one's self in minutiae, when we can see great characteristics, that strike the eye at once."

or dominion. (The *οὔπω* is at any rate the correct explanation of the *οὐκ*, if not the original reading, comp. ver. 10.) The matter concerns not *a* kingdom, but worldly dominion. It concerns not the existence of nations with their respective governments, but this, *that they were no longer to come forth as the reigning power on the theatre of the world's history.* Not existence, but reiging power is what first belongs to the future.—The expression, *one hour*, is explained by the *ὀλίγον*, a little, short time, in ver. 10.[1] History delivers for the "one hour," a remarkable confirmation. The first appearance of the German tribes on the stage of public history almost entirely coincides with the commencement of their conversion to Christianity. But the short continuance is here affirmed, not of the power of the horns or kings generally, but only of their power *with the beast.* What lies beyond this, does not properly belong to the matter. Since after the overthrow of these kings through Christ (comp. ver. 14 and ch. xix. 11, ss.), no new human monarchy is mentioned, since also this overthrow is to be accomplished by no inferior instrumentality (as was the case in all the earlier phases of the worldly power, not excepting the Roman), but only by Christ, and his church, we, therefore, *cannot doubt, that on the power, which the ten kings receive with the beast, another will follow, which they shall receive from Christ.* —*As kings*, that reign not merely over their own subjects, but over the world. For the context treats of the dominion of the world; it is with the different phases of this, that the prophecy is occupied. The word, *with the beast*, is involved in the nature of the subject, and would have to be supplied, if it were not expressed. The character of their dominion, as opposed to God and Christ, is implied above in the circumstance, that they are *horns on the head of the beast.* The *admission* of the kings is inseparably connected with the *abolition* of Rome. But the beast is not affected by this change. As Rome at an earlier period received power with the beast, so now the kings receive the same. It is a change in the phases of the wordly power, while this itself continues for the

1 Against Vitringa's exposition: at one and the same time (Vulg. una hora) the parallel *ὀλίγον αὐτὸν δεῖ μεῖναι* is decisive. So also in ver. 14, where the ceasing of the *ἐξουσία*, indicated in the "one hour," is extended. The *μίαν ὥραν*, one hour long, occurs also in Matth. xxvi. 40, *μιᾷ ὥρᾳ*, in one (single) hour, in ch. xviii. 10, comp. ver. 8. *Πρὸς ὥραν*, Gal. ii. 5, *πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας*, 1 Thess. ii. 17, correspond.

time unchanged. Those, who understand by the beast heathen Rome, and those likewise who understand by it the papacy, are involved in no small perplexity by the expression here "with the beast," and also by ver. 13. They suppose, that the ten kings shall hold only *at first* with the beast (Bossuet, "with Rome which shall not lose all at once her power"), and that they shall afterwards rise up against her. But it is against this view, that in ver. 12—14, the matter of the horns is so far cut off, that in ver. 15—18, where the whore is the subject of discourse, nothing absolutely new can be introduced in regard to the horns, nothing can be brought in, which has not a point of contact with something in the portion preceding ver. 15. But such would be the case if the beast were heathen Rome, or the papacy. Then, here it would be friendship, there quite suddenly and immediately enmity. Not to mention that according to ver. 16, not merely the horns, but also the beast itself, shall hate and persecute the whore, Rome.

Ver. 13. *These have one mind and give their power and their authority to the beast.* The expression, "with the beast," is enlarged upon and explained. *One mind*, in reference to what is here under consideration, and which is expressly brought out in the second part of the verse (comp. ver. 17.) For, otherwise, the being of one mind is against the nature of evil. Sin is as certainly the mother of division, as selfishness is inherent in its very nature. —If the beast is the God-opposing power of the world, impelled by a thirst of conquest, and a desire of dominion, then in the circumstance of their giving their power and authority with one mind to the beast, the foundation is laid of their unanimity in seeking to destroy Rome. The new possessors of the worldly power could only stand in an attitude of hostility toward its former possessors. But another consequence also springs from it, and one unfolded in what immediately follows—their war against the Lamb.

Ver. 14. *These shall war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them—for he is a Lord of lords, and a King of kings—and with him the called, and chosen and believing.* Our eye rests with deep emotion upon this passage; for it presents an insight into the destiny of our own race, which at the time lay profoundly concealed. The verse has altogether a pro-

visional character. The proper theme here is only the *judgment of the whore*, and nothing of a particular and definite nature can be introduced respecting the ten kings, excepting what they have to do concerning this judgment. But for the purpose of giving a preliminary glance into what is coming, there is an indication of the *farther* doings and fate of the ten kings. The whole of the divine purposes in regard to them must be apprehended, in order that the part taken by them from the first may be seen in its true light. We consider the instruments of the divine *wrath* with quite another eye, when we know, that they are destined to become vessels of divine *grace*. The filling up of the outline here is given in ch. xix. 11—21, where the war of the ten kings against Christ, and his victory over them, is particularly described. However, this passage serves also to supplement the other (comp. on ch. xix. 11—21.)—The war of the ten kings against Christ manifests itself in their assaults on his church (comp. Acts ix. 4, 5.) It is in accordance with the real nature of things, that Christ should be mentioned as the proper object of the conflict, and as the proper author of the victory. It is only when a superficial view is taken, that the human comes into the fore-ground. But we must not on that account say with Bengel, "The victory belongs alone to the Lamb, and not to his associates. These must only follow, and even if the attack is directed against them, must look on at the victory." Believers are expressly represented as sharers in the *victory*, and they must also be regarded as sharers in the *conflict*; there can be nothing here of a mere looking on; this holds only in regard to such conflicts as the one discoursed of in ver. 16. Among the first witnesses for the war of the ten kings against Christ, which the history of the period presents to us, are the numerous martyrs, who fell among the Goths in the persecution of Athanarich.[1] They were followed by a train of others, among

1 August. de civ. dei. xviii. 52, Rex Gothorum in ipsa Gothia persecutus est Christianos crudelitate mirabili, quorum plurimi martyrio coronati sunt, sicut a quibusdam fratribus, qui tunc illic pueri fuerant, et se ista vidisse incunctanter recordabantur, audivimus. Orosius L. vii. c. 32: Athanaricus rex Gothorum, Christianos in gente sua crudelissime persecutus, plurimos Barbarorum ob fidem interfectos, ad coronam martyrii sublimavit, quorum tamen plurimi in Romanum solum non trepide velut ad hostes, sed certi, quod ad fratres, pro Christi confessione, fugerunt. See in regard to this persecution, Massmann, Exp. of Ev. John, in the Gothic language. In regard to the terrible persecution of the Christian church by the Vandals in Africa, see Ruinart, Historia persecutionis Vandalicae, Paris, 1694, and Papencordt's hist. of the Vandal dominion in

whom appears the august form of Boniface.—*The Lamb shall overcome them;* Berangarius remarks at the beginning of the ninth century, "We know, that these tribes have, with few exceptions, received the yoke of Christ." Even at the beginning of the fifth century, Orosius says, that in the East and the West the churches of Christ were filled with Huns, Suevi, Vandals, Burgundians, and an incredible number of believers from among other barbarous nations.[1] A rapid survey is given by Kortüm in his history of the middle ages, of the farther progress of Christ's victory, "After the German-Arian confession had lost all its public importance, by the subjection of the Eastern Goths and Vandals, and the desertion of the Western Goths, Burgundians, and Longobards, the orthodox church attained to a purer form among the Irish, Scots, and Anglo-Saxons, than elsewhere, by the proscription among them of intolerance, the limitation of outward pomp in Divine worship, and the striving towards a cultivated and moral condition, not through fire and sword, but through doctrine and instruction. Persons reared under such principles, possessing a fearless spirit and a quick intelligence, and distinguished by a blameless walk, seldom failed to accomplish the end of their laborious and disinterested missions among rude but vigorous barbarians. This course was followed in the seventh century among the Germans of the high-country, by the Scotch Columba and Gallus, out of whose hermitage arose the monastery that became so active in the interest of Christianity and civilization, among the Bavarians by Emmeran, among the East Franks and Thuringians by Kilian, among the Frisians by Willibrod, among the Hessians by the Anglo-Saxon Winfred (Boniface), who was the centre of the new ecclesiastical direction of the eighth cen-

Africa. Quadi, Marcomanni, and others, passed the Danube in the 4th century, "spread desolation with fire and sword, broke down churches, scattered about the bones of the saints," etc. See Kortüm Hist. of middle ages, p. 41. Of the irruption of Radogast, with his 200,000 men into Italy, this author says, "The devastation was frightful; villages, towns, churches, lay in ashes; no sanctuary, no monument of art, could escape the fury of these equally warlike and zealous worshippers of Odin."

1 B. VII. c. 41: Quanquam si ob hoc solum barbari Romanis finibus immissi forent, quod vulgo per Orientem et Occidentem ecclesiae Christi Hunnis et Suevis, Vandalis et Burgundionibus diversisque et innumeris credentium populis replentur, laudanda et attollenda dei misericordia videretur: quandoquidem, etsi cum labefactione nostri, tantae gentes agnitionem veritatis acciperent, quam invenire utique nisi hac occasione non possent.

tury, for the whole of north Germany. In East France the archbishoprick of Mentz (748), whose diocese comprehended Cologne, Strassburg, Worms, Utrecht, and other chapters, the bishopricks of Saltzburg, Regensburg, Passau, Wurzburg, Eichstadt, the monastery of Fulda (since 744), Ohrdruf, and Fritzlar, gave strength and order to the straggling efforts of the missionaries that chiefly came from the Anglo-Saxons, became nurseries of milder manners, and of advancing commerce and knowledge, but, at the sametime, props of the state of things that was meanwhile gradually forming by the encroachments of the bishoprick of Rome."—The words, "King of kings and Lord of lords," point to the foundation of Christ's victory. The Lamb conquers because he is the Lord of lords; believers conquer because they are with the Lamb. Allusion is made here, as in ch. xix. 6 (where Christ is called, in reverse order, the King of kings and the Lord of lords), to 1 Tim. vi. 14, 15, "Till the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom in his times he shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and the Lord of lords." Intentionally that is here ascribed to Christ, which is there primarily declared of the Father, in accordance with the object of John, always to ascribe to the Son what belongs to the Father. The allusion to that passage in St Paul's writings can the less be overlooked, as it goes hand in hand with what immediately follows in the passage. Besides, John ascribes to Christ nothing more than what he assumes to himself when he says that all power is committed to him in heaven and on earth (Matt. xxviii. 18), and promises to be with his people always, even to the end of the world.—The addition, *and with the called and chosen and believing* (properly, and who are with him, called, etc.), is of great importance. Rome, too, fought with Christ, and was conquered by him; not there, however, are the *chosen* the instruments, but the ten kings are so, who execute his work without knowing and wishing it. The *spiritual* conquest of Rome lies beyond the sphere of the Apocalypse. There the word in 1 Cor. xiii. 9, "we prophecy in part," holds with the Seer. The circumstance of the called, etc., being mentioned as the instruments of Christ's victory, shows that the victory here meant can be no bloody and destroying one, but that it was to be won by properly Christian arms, such as are described by Paul in Eph. vi. 10, ss.—The true

members of Christ are described by three marks, the first and the last of a palpable nature, the second hidden, and manifesting itself in the existence of the first and third, so that where these are it cannot fail, nor can it be found where they are wanting. The expressions are rather Paul's than John's.[1] But Paul had rendered them familiar to those for whom John wrote, so that they are here to be regarded as a sort of proper names.

Ver. 15. *And he says to me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sits, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.* The new addition, "and he says to me," when viewed in connection with the words in ver. 1, "I will shew thee the judgment of the great whore," shews that the angel here first properly reaches his object; that what in the preceding verses was said of the beast, the heads, and the horns, merely served as a foundation for what was to be said here of the woman, Rome. In regard to the *waters*, see on ver. 1. It was there shewn that the peoples are brought into view here only in respect to the advantage which they afforded to the mistress of the world, and that it is properly this advantage, which is imaged by the waters. The contrast to the waters, as indicative of the advantage connected with an extensive worldly dominion, is formed by the dry and naked *wilderness*, and by what is said in ver. 16, that they shall make her desolate, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.—The prophet first sees the *woman*, according to ver. 3, in the wilderness. There too, therefore, must he have seen the waters upon which she still sits—the present is to be carefully marked. But they could only have served as a symbol of her *vanished* glory, as indeed the sitting of the woman on the beast in ver. 3 also denotes an already vanished condition. The symbolical representation of the former glory makes the wilderness appear all the more dismal.—The question, How can the woman sit at once upon the beast and upon the waters? is to be answered thus, that she simply sits upon the beast upon or by the waters.—The enumeration of the peoples, etc., completes itself in the number *four*, the signature of the *earth*. In the parallel

1 The κλητός nowhere else occurs in the Apoc. nor in the other writings of John; ἐκλεκτός occurs only in 2 John i. 13, where it should also be regarded as written large; πιστός in the sense of *believing* only in John xx. 27. That it has here the signification of *believing*, not faithful (Vitringa), appears from its connection with the two other Pauline terms.

passages quoted at ch. xiii. 7, in place of the *multitudes* or masses, which occur only here, we have *tribes*, once *kings;* comp. at ch. v. 9. Here, where only an advantage is taken into account connected with dominion, the reference to the masses of the governed is the more suitable.

Ver. 16. *And the ten horns, which thou sawest, and the beast,*[1] *these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire.* The angel says to John, in ver. 1, "Come, I will shew thee the judgment of the great whore." This shewing takes place even in ver. 3. The angel conducts John in spirit into the wilderness, and lets him there see the woman. Here the meaning of what is shewn to John and seen by him, is disclosed. Here, therefore, the future is introduced. For, as to its import what was now seen as present belonged to the future. The ten horns are known to us already from the preceding verses, as the new holders of the worldly power. Here, where the angel arrives at the proper theme, the judgment of the woman, it is expressly declared, what in the preceding portion had been already indicated, that the horns shall put an end to the woman. The ten horns sit upon the seventh head. It is thereby intimated, that the new holders of the ungodly power of the world, with all their independence and self-sufficiency, are still bound to each other by a certain *unity*. We must not, therefore, draw into the number the Parthians or the Mahommedans, which has also against it ver. 14; but must only think of nations of the Germanic race, and such as were immediately conjoined with them.—On the expression, *and the beast*, comp. in ver. 12 *with the beast*, according to which all the undertakings of the ten kings are placed under the auspices of the beast.—The *οὗτοι, these*, is employed with as much emphasis as the *he* in ver. 11. It is designed to direct attention to those, who were

[1] Luther has: the ten horns, which thou sawest upon the beast, after the false reading ἐπὶ τὸ θηρίον, which merely arose from people not knowing how to begin with καὶ τὸ θηρίον (the reading which is found in all the best authorities), on account of the false idea they had formed of the beast. For the same reason, some MSS. altogether omit the words; Grotius would read κατὰ τὸ θηρίου; and the Coptic version has, quae vidisti cum bestia. Bengel remarks against the reading ἐπὶ τὸ θηρίον: Ipsa phrasis cornua vidisti ἐπὶ τὸ θηρίον hiulca est, et dissimilis phrasibus, quibus nomen in fronte scriptum ac bestia cornua habens dicitur.

destined by God to avenge the poor cause of Christ upon the persecutor Rome.—The *whore* here represents not the city Rome as *opposed* to the kingdom, but the city as the mistress and centre of the kingdom, so that every assault, which is directed against the land, is also directed against it; every injury which affects the kingdom, also affects it.[1]—They shall make her bare or *naked*, while before she had been arrayed in purple and scarlet, and bespangled with gold and gems and pearls, sitting upon her throne.—The *flesh* is in the plural. Bengel gives the meaning correctly: "her *much* flesh." By the flesh is denoted the material power and the kingdom. The powerful and rich evil-doer appears even in the Old Testament as thick and fat —comp. for example Ps. lxxiii. 4, 7.—Nothing occurs, which does not suit the symbol of the woman; nothing that constrains us to go back immediately to the subject denoted by it.[2] The being made desolate or waste not unfrequently occurs also of persons, since these are represented under the image of a city prostrated by enemies, or of a devastated country. So in Judges v. 27; Ps. xvii. 9; Sir. xvi. 4. Accordingly we should refer also the words: and shall burn her with fire, not primarily to the city, but to the woman, of whom it is also spoken in ch. xviii. 8. The fire is here, according to ch. viii. 7, not so properly material fire, as the fire of war.[3]

1 This, the only correct meaning, is found even in Berengaudus, when he remarks on the burning of her with fire: Scimus plurimas civitates, vicos et castella, quae Romano imperio subjacebant, ab his gentibus fuisse concremata.

2 As Züllig, for example remarks, They shall hate her—the whore, and shall make waste her—the city, and make her—the woman, naked, and shall burn with fire her—the city.

3 How the representation in the verse passed into fulfilment, may be learned from the following declarations of those, who lived at the time of the fulfilment. Jerome says, in his ep. 123 ad Ageruchiam: Praesentium miseriarum pauca percurram. Quod rari hucusque residemus, non nostri meriti, sed domini misericordiae est. Innumerabiles et ferocissimae nationes universas Gallias occuparunt. Quidquid inter Alpes et Pyrenaeum est, quod Oceano et Rheno includitur, Quadus, Vandalus, Sarmata, Halani, Gipedes, Heruli, Saxones, Burgundiones, Alemanni et, O lugenda republica, hostes Pannonii vastarunt. He says also of the taking of Rome by Alaric in ep. 127 ad Principiam: Capitur urbs quae totum cepit orbem, imo fame perit antequam gladio, et vix pauci qui caperentur inventi sunt. Ad nefandos cibos erupit esurientium rabies, et sua invicem membra laniarunt, dum mater not parcit lactenti infantiae, et recipit utero, quem paulo ante effuderat. See also his introd. to his Comm. on Ezekiel and at the commencement of the seventh book for his lamentation on the destruction of Rome. Salvian says, De gubernatione dei B. VI. p. 115: *Arsimus*, arsimus, et tamen flammas, quibus jam arsimus, non timemus. P. 129: Ubi namque sunt antiquae Romanorum opes atque dignitates? Fortissimi quondam Romani erant, nunc sine viribus. Timebantur Romani veteres, nos timemus. Vectigalia illis solvebant populi Barbarorum, nos vectigales Barbaris sumus. Venduut nobis hostes lucis usuram. Tota ad-

Ver. 17. *For God has given it to their hearts, to do his mind, and to do one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, till the words of God shall be fulfilled.* Before *his mind*, we are to suppose a dash to be placed. They appear to accomplish their own mind. The reference to this mind or purpose of their own, on the part of the kings and the beast, and the respect to the second *mind*, has effected, that here the subject of discourse is God's mind—which of itself sounds somewhat strange—instead of his *purpose*. (See also in Ezra vi. 14 for an example of the mind of God standing in immediate connection with the mind of man.) Some are of opinion, that the subject of discourse is not the mind of God, but the mind of the beast. But the beast is too far distant, and in the preceding verses is not distinctly enough marked as the proper author of the hostile proceeding, while the destruction of the woman is expressly described as the determinate purpose of God. (Comp. the words in ver. 1, "I will shew thee the *judgment* of the great whore," and in ver. 12, "They receive power as kings.") —*And to do one mind.* How wonderful that one mighty impulse should thus urge these peoples, each independent of one another, and in part even hostile to each other, so that they could not rest, till they had accomplished their end! That they do one mind, stands in the closest connection with this, that they do the mind of God, and from that alone receives its explanation.—*They give their kingdom to the beast*, for the destruction of Rome, and at the same time to make war upon the church—comp. ver. 14. The ground on which this giving proceeds, is their own sinfulness, their alienation from God, their unconverted state. On this ground God, who turns the hearts of kings, and their people like the rivers of waters, turns them so, that instead of being content to sit at home in their obscurity and sloth, they should come forth on the theatre of the world's history. The sins, which they there committed, in the horrors they inflicted on Rome and the war they waged against the church, belonged to themselves; the bitter fountain from which they flowed, sprang in their own hearts and existed before these things were done. But the impulse awakened in their minds by God served, not only to execute his

modum salus nostra commercium est. B VII. p. 143: Quid enim vel de nobis vel de Gothis ac Vandalis deus judicet, res probat. Illi crescunt quotidie, nos decrescimus; illi proficiunt, nos humiliamur; illi florent, et nos arescimus, etc.

judgment on Babylon, but also to bring about their conversion, and along therewith the fulfilment of the word of God. It is clear as day, that we are not to substitute the mere *permission* of God in the place of putting it into their heart. That is to be rejected on doctrinal, as well as exegetical grounds. It is a grievous humiliation of God, when in anxious solitude for his glory one would ascribe to him only the part of an idle *looker-on* in the most important events of the world's history. (See the considerations presented on the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in my Beitr. vol. iii., p. 462, ss.)—What *word of God* is meant, is rendered more specific, partly from the parallel passage in ch. x. 7, "the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets," and partly from ver. 16 and ver. 14. By these we are taught to limit the expression to the *promises of victory given to the church.* These pass into fulfilment, first when Rome is overthrown by the ten kings, and then when they themselves are overcome by the Lamb, and are received into the bosom of the Christian church.

Ver. 18. *And the woman, that thou sawest, is the great city, which has kingdom over the kings of the earth.* In regard to the great city, see on ch. xvi. 19. It is the city, which had dominion in the time of the Seer, that is spoken of. In vain have Bengel and others employed their ingenuity on the *has.* It never once means: which *then* has. In the presence of the great city, which then had dominion over the kings of the earth, John must necessarily have expressed himself otherwise, if he had not meant *that* city, which all his first readers would naturally think of, but another one. Besides, if the kings are worldly kings, then the kingdom, which the woman has, will be a worldly kingdom. Papal Rome, too, has never had for the papacy the same importance, which heathen Rome had for the Roman empire. The pope has never been, like the emperor, only the representative of Rome, so that the dominion might be attributed, not to him, but to Rome, as is done here.[1]

[1] The close connection between Rome and the imperial dignity is manifest alone from this, that the same temple was erected at once to Rome and to Augustus—comp. Spanheim de usu numism. I., p. 138—and also from Hadrian building in Rome itself a temple to the city. Designations of Rome corresponding to what is written in the text may be found among Roman writers in great abundance; for ex. Martial: Terrarum dea genti-

Ch. xviii. The destruction of the Babylon of the time then present has already been announced in ch. xvii. But the bare announcement was not enough in respect to an event, which it was so immensely difficult for the contemporaries of John to believe. It was proper, therefore, to clothe the announcement with flesh and blood, to meet the reality, which lay with an oppressive load upon their minds, with an *ideal* reality—to make a provisional draught on history. It was the custom of the old prophets, as in Jer. l., li. to pourtray the destruction of ancient Babylon in every variety of detail, in more than a hundred verses, at the time that she held the people of God captive under her cruel dominion, and was preparing to inflict upon them the last fatal blow. And Ezekiel, in ch xl.—xlviii. meets the despair, that was produced by the destruction of the temple by an extended delineation of its restoration, which might serve the purpose of an *interim-temple* to the tried and disconsolate people. In like manner is there given in this chapter a pictorial representation of the overthrow of the new Babylon. The fulness of detail and vividness of colouring with which this is done, proceeds on the supposition, that it is extremely difficult, *not to see and yet to believe.* We stand in a somewhat different relation to this representation, from the contemporaries of St John, as we have before our eyes the history which was anticipated and drawn upon in the words of the Seer. However, we have something more to do than to throw ourselves back to the case and position of the Christians of that age, in order that we may enter with interest into the consideration of all the particulars. It will go much farther to impart significance to it, if in the room of that now vanquished ungodly power we put all, that in our day is threatening the kingdom of God with destruction. In this course we shall be following the pattern of St John himself, who *throughout makes the fulfilled prophecy of the Old Testament the foundation of his announcement,* and delineates the downfal of Rome in the words that had already been verified; the words, in which Isaiah had depicted the coming downfall of rich Tyre, and

umque Roma, cui par est nihil, et nihil secundum; Amm. Marcellinus: Per omnes quotquot sunt partes terrarum et Domina suspecta et regina. The Roman senate was called by Cicero populorum omnium ac regum consilium. See also in Spanheim I., p. 138—and for proofs of Rome being called the queen or reigning city, Ib. II. p. 101.

Jeremiah that of the great Babylon of ancient times. There is for us in a sense even more in this chapter than there was for the contemporaries of the Seer, precisely as these found in a certain respect more in those prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah than the persons to whom they were primarily addressed. The inspiring idea remains perpetually living and powerful, and it has received, through the already accomplished overthrow of heathen Rome, a new security for its approaching realization. The comparison of prophecy and history in regard to heathen Rome strongly convinces us, that the fire from heaven, which, according to ch. xx., is to consume Gog and Magog, is no mere fancy.

The chapter falls into three chief divisions. First, the appearance of the angel with great power, who comes down from heaven, and announces the fall of Babylon as accomplished, ver. 1—3. Then, the announcement of the voice from heaven, ver. 4—20. Finally, the appearance of the angel, who throws a great stone into the sea, and then explains the meaning of this symbolical transaction, ver. 21—24. The first and the third parts may be regarded as a kind of introduction and conclusion. The voice from heaven forms the main burden of the prophecy. This voice first addresses the people of Christ, that may be in Babylon, ver. 4, 5, and then the instruments of God's judgment upon her, ver. 6—8. It next describes in ver. 9, 10, the mourning of the kings; in ver. 11—16, the mourning of the merchants of the earth; in ver. 17—19, the mourning of the mariners on the sea over the downfal of Babylon; and at the close, in ver. 20, calls upon the heaven with its inhabitants, the members of the church, to rejoice over her. So that the conclusion returns to the beginning; for the whole had begun with an address to the members of the church.

First in ver. 1—3, Christ the conqueror of Babylon proclaims her downfal.

Ver. 1. *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, who had great power, and the earth was enlightened with his glory.* That the other angel is no other than Christ, we are led to conclude in the first instance from ch. x. 1, "And I saw another angel come down from heaven, who was clothed with a cloud, and the rainbow upon his head, and his countenance as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." The ma-

nifestly intentional agreement in expression with that passage points to the identity of the person. Farther, that the angel had great power, and made the earth light with his glory, has no proper connection with the end immediately in view. No application is made here of the power and the glory. The angel does not act, he only speaks; he proclaims the victory already accomplished over Babylon. The great power and glory, therefore, can only be intended to shew, that the announcer of the victory over Rome was, at the same time, the author of it. But then any *inferior* angel could never be regarded as the one, who was to execute this great work. This may at once, however, be understood of Christ. All that the Father does, the Son does likewise. In ch. xvii. 17, xix. 1, the downfal of Rome is carried up to God; and as he does every thing *for* Christ, so he also does it *through* Christ. It is Christ against whom, in ch. xvii. 14, the ten kings war after Rome, and who overcomes them. He, the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords, must also show himself to be such in the destruction of that Babylon, which had risen up against him and his kingdom. Finally, it is to Christ that the words themselves point, "the earth was enlightened with his glory," to which those in ch. x. 1, "his countenance was like the sun," correspond. *Glory* is a prerogative of God the Father, and of his only begotten Son (comp. John i. 14, ii. 11, xii. 41, xlii. 24; Rev. i. 16, x. 1, xxi. 23; where, as here, the illumination is represented as going forth from the glory.) He also, by whose glory the *whole earth* was illuminated, can be no other than the *Lord of the earth.* But this is only Christ (comp. at ch. x. 2.) All doubt, however, is removed by the fundamental passage, Ezek. xviii. 2, where it is said of Jehovah, "the earth was enlightened by his glory" (comp. also Hab. iii. 3, "and the earth is full of his praise," Ps. l. 1, xciv. 1.)—This, therefore, is the result: *Christ as Rome's conqueror proclaims here the victory.* In point of fact, that which he proclaims, who has great power and enlightens the earth with his glory, was *still future.* So much the more then should the express mention of his power and glory have served to comfort believers. It furnished a ground of security to them for believing, that what John as their representative had seen in vision, should at the proper time in the reality be brought in with irresistible power. Before *this* glory the glory of Rome must

grow pale. In regard to the great power of Christ, see Matth. xxviii. 18.

Ver. 2. *And he cried in strength and said, She is fallen, she is fallen, Babylon the great, and has become an habitation of demons, and a hold of all unclean spirits, and a hold of all unclean and hateful birds.* The expression, *in strength*, alludes to Ps. xxix. 4, "The voice of the Lord is in strength." What is declared there of the voice of Jehovah, is here transferred to the voice of Christ, exactly as in ver. 1 that is affirmed of Christ, which in the fundamental passage of Ezekiel is spoken of Jehovah.[1] The power in the *calling* afforded a pledge for power in the *doing*, and was, therefore, full of consolation for those who were oppressed by the city that then had the name of power.—In regard to the words, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great," comp. on ch. xiv. 8, xvi. 19. The preterite *there* is a prophetical one; it denotes a fact, which even as a part of the vision was still future. But here it is used of a fact which, viewed in respect to the vision, had now entered—comp. ch. xvii. 3. For the vision the victory was even in the preceding chapter a completed fact; the judgment of the great whore was already put in force; the woman was already placed in the wilderness; only the exposition of the symbol there makes use of the futures. If we give due attention to this, and to the *continuous* use of the preterites in the discourse of the angel, we shall not doubt that proclamation is here made of what has already been done.—In regard to the *demons*, evil spirits, see at ch. ix. 20, xvi. 14. The fundamental passages are Isa. xiii. 21, where it is said of ancient Babylon as fallen, "And *bucks* dance there," in connection with owls and ostriches; and Isa. xxxiv. 14, "And one *buck* calls to another, there also reposes the night-spectre and finds rest to itself." From

1 The LXX. render Ps. xxix. 4, φωνὴ κυρίου ἐν ἰσχύι. The significant allusion to this verse is in favour of what is here certainly the reading, that has least external support, ἐν ἰσχύι; the more so, as also in what immediately precedes that is transferred to the angel, Christ, which in the Old Testament is declared of Jehovah. The Hebraistic ἐν ἰσχύι was an occasion of offence to the copyists. They therefore substituted for it the plain ἐν ἰσχυρᾷ φωνῇ. We cannot understand how any should have thought of the heterogeneous ἐν ἰσχύι. The thoughtful allusion to Ps. xxix. 4 can neither be conceived of as a matter of accident, nor as the design of a copyist. The variations in respect to the placing and omitting of the ἐν as connected with ἰσχυρᾷ φωνῇ also seem to bespeak the fabrication of this reading, as does the combined reading followed by Luther: ἐν ἰσχύι, φωνῇ μέγαλῃ.

the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, with its idolatrous worship of buck or he-goats, the heathen gods were primarily called among them *bucks* (comp. Lev. xvii. 7 ; 2 Chron. xi. 15 ; and Egypt and the Books of Moses, p. 213, also Beitr. II. p. 118, ss.), and then *evil spirits*, which constituted the back-ground of idolatry. The LXX. in Isa. xiii. 21 have, " and *demons* shall dance there ;" and in Baruch iv. 35 it is said, " and has been inhabited by demons for a very long time." Now, if the passage before us and the fundamental passages of Isaiah were all, then with some justice we might speak, with Vitringa, of rhetorical descriptions of desolation, with Bossuet of the manner of speech drawn from popular discourse, although this is certainly not, as regards the usage of the prophets, what most readily occurs. But there are indications in other parts of Scripture, which place evil spirits in connection with the wilderness and desolation, and in which we cannot avail ourselves of such a resource. Satan bears, in Lev. xvi., the name of Azazel, the *separated* (see Egypt and Books of Moses, p. 166), and the he-goat is sent to him into the wilderness, as to his proper place of abode. In the declaration of the Lord, in Matt. xii. 43, the waste and dry places appear pre-eminently as the seat of evil spirits, and the manifest allusion there to Isa. xxxiv. 14 seems to withdraw this passage from the sphere of a simply poetical representation. In Luke viii. 27 it is said of a man who had demons, " he abode not in the house, but was in the *tombs*." In accordance with these indications of Scripture is the disagreeable horror which comes over us in such places. Analogous representations fetched from beyond the region of Scripture cannot properly be brought to invalidate its intimations, but rather tend to strengthen them, as a kind of consensus gentium.—The unclean or impure spirits are *personal* spirits. Bengel remarks, " Between these two kinds (demons and unclean birds) stand impure spirits, which may consequently be human spirits, that in the bodily life had hardened themselves in impurity. In waste places, where men cease to dwell, such spirits rush in and take possession of them.—Unclean spirits, as distinguished from devils and fallen angels, are departed souls of unholy men. This is a very clear passage for such spirits, which are called spectres when they appear to the living. That which during the bodily life had continued in impurity,

in uncleanness, and other sins, remains impure in death and after death. Therefore should we prize purification through the blood of Jesus." But in ch. xvi. 13, 14, unclean spirits are first mentioned, and then the spirits of demons. Hence, and likewise from the common designation of demons as impure spirits, we cannot suppose that any essential distinction is meant to be introduced here between demons and impure spirits. Otherwise, countenance would be given to the manifestly false imagination that ruins are a *dwelling* for demons, a place of custody for all impure spirits. We ought rather to suppose that demons are spoken of under another name, for the purpose of placing them along with unclean birds, and to bring out the new and additional element, that their dwelling is there, where such birds are *obliged* to make their resort. At the most, we might suppose that the designation of unclean spirits is a comprehensive one, so that it may also comprise the spirits of dead men. It may, however, be asked if these also are not comprehended in the class of demons. But in any case we must not put the unclean spirits as contradistinguished from the demons in a separate class.—A *hold* or place of custody is mentioned in connection with the unclean spirits. Bengel says, "*Habitation—hold*, two different words. The first denotes a much freer place of sojourn, while the second means a prison or guard-house, and in the Greek occurs also in ch. ii. 10, xx. 7." The unclean spirits are banished to a place which is a true image of their state. As in the case of the unclean *birds*, so in theirs it is the *law of their nature* that banishes them thither. A ruined existence is at home among ruins. They leave them only to make others partakers of their misery.—*The unclean birds* (comp. Ps. cii. 6, "I am like the pelican of the wilderness, I am as an owl of ruins," Isa. xiii. 21, 22, xxxiv. 14; Jer. l. 39; Zeph. ii. 14), on account of the natural impulses implanted in them by God, are in a manner banished to the haunts of desolation, from which all living creatures, it might seem, would shrink with horror.

Ver. 3. *For all heathen have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have been made rich by the power of her luxury.* We have here only one reason for the downfal of Rome, viz. her oppression of the nations.

In ch. xiv. 8, xvii. 2, also one cause only is assigned. According to ver. 23 the *luxury* is brought into notice only in so far as by reason of *extortions* it was the means of contributing to that oppression. On the *wine of the wrath of fornication*, the cunning, love-feigning policy whereby Rome compassed the destruction of the nations, see at ch. xiv. 8. On the *committing of fornication with Babylon by the kings*, which is considered as pressed on them, see on ch. xvii. 2. The power of her *luxury*, her powerful luxury.

We have now in ver. 4—20 the voice from heaven. Ver. 4. *And I heard another voice from heaven, which said, Go out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues.* It is not said, another *angel*, but another *voice*. The voice must be the voice of *Christ*. For, in ver. 5, God is spoken of in the third person, and the speaker calls the people of God *his* people. The identity of the person speaking in both cases is also indicated by the close manner in which the word here joins to the preceding verse: out of her, not out of Babylon. It is not against the reference to Christ that the voice is said to be from heaven—comp. with ver. 1. For, the vision of Christ coming down from heaven is now to be considered as *past*. Its aim is accomplished in proclaiming the victory over Rome.—The stand-point here is a somewhat different one from that in vers. 1—3. There the storm has already discharged itself, here it hangs lowering from the heavens. Perhaps it is in unison with the difference of the stand-point, that here the voice is heard resounding from heaven. The coming down of the angel from heaven, in ver. 1, presupposes that the storm of divine wrath has already discharged itself.—The call to the people of God rests upon the two fundamental passages, Jer. li. 6, "Flee out of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul; *be not cut off in her iniquity;* for this is a time of vengeance for the Lord, he recompenses to her the gift;" and ver. 45, "Go out of her, my people, and deliver every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord." These fundamental passages (on which also Zech. ii. 10 rests) again point back to the type of Lot, to whom the angel in Gen. xix. 15 said, "Arise, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city;" and in ver. 17, "deliver thy soul." In the words, "that ye be not partakers in her sins,

and receive not her plagues," the second clause serves for an explanation of the first; it has respect to that, in which a participation in the sins consists. The mere "be partakers in her sins," having a double import, could not properly stand alone. Sins are as little here, as any where else, *punishments* of sins. But that a participation in sins consists in a participation of the punishment inflicted on account of sins, is plain from the fundamental passages.—The call here, as in the fundamental passages, is not meant to be taken in the strictly literal sense, as is evident alone from this, that Rome is not mentioned here as a particular city, but as the representative of the Roman empire. The object is more immediately to point to the certainty and greatness of the destruction that threatened Babylon, to give a powerful blow to that fear for Babylon, by which the minds of men were then so much moved. Why should they be afraid of that, which itself had to fear the worst? Still, this call leaves no room to doubt, that the care of the Lord to preserve and deliver his people in the midst of his judgments on the world, as was manifested of old in the case of Lot, and as was represented and pledged in ch. vii. 1—8 of this book, should also unfold itself in the time of his judgment on Rome. And history has preserved to us many proofs, that this actually was the case. The quotations given by Bossuet, for example, shew how at the taking of Rome by Alarich, which was a particular act of the great drama of vengeance, the Lord manifested his watchful care and faithfulness.

Ver. 5. *For her sins reach to heaven, and God remembers her iniquities.* It marks the highest degree of sin, when it is spoken of as reaching to heaven, pressing in before God's throne and calling down his vengeance—comp. 2 Chron. xxviii. 9, where the prophet Obed says of a heinous transgression, that "it reaches to the heavens," Ezra ix. 6, "our guilt is great unto the heavens," Gen. iv. 10, xviii. 21, xix. 13; Jon. i. 2. The fundamental passage is Jer. li. 9, "for her *judgment* reaches unto heaven, and extends even to the clouds." It has been in vain tried to explain away the difference between this passage and the verse before us. By *sins* here *punishments* can as little be denoted, as the *judgment* in Jeremiah can denote *sins*. In Jeremiah himself, however, the foundation is laid for substituting sins here in the place of judgment. For the otherwise somewhat anomalous *reaching up of*

judgment to heaven, presupposes the reaching up of sins thither, precisely as in the fundamental passage, Ps. xxxvi. 6 (comp. lvii. 10), *the goodness and faithfulness of God* reaching to the clouds and to heaven, forms the contrast to the arrogance of the wicked, which strives to scale the very heavens. Where sins are found piercing through even to heaven, there infallibly the judgment of God presses down to the earth, and thence again rises up giant-like to the heaven. It is said here literally, her sins have adhered even to heaven. This is a pregnant construction for : they reach to the heaven and adhere to it.[1] The *sticking fast* of guilt to heaven is an aggravating mark of its greatness.—The second clause serves as an explanation of the first. Even in ch. xvi. 9 it is said, "and Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give to her the cup," etc.

Ver. 6. *Render to her as she also has rendered, and double double according to her works ;*[2] *in the cup, which she has mixed, mix to her double.* The voice from heaven, which in ver. 4, 5, has addressed the people of God, turns now to the instruments of vengeance, which, we learn from ch. xvii. 16, to be the ten kings. That the servants of the divine judgment are addressed cannot be doubted from the fundamental passage, Jer. l. 29, "Recompense to her after her deeds, after all that she has done, do to her."—Luther has : as she has rendered to *you.* But the *to you* is neither sufficiently confirmed, nor is it suitable. They are the instruments of divine recompense, not for what they had *themselves* specially suffered, but for what *mankind* had suffered from Rome. *As she also has rendered,* or recompensed, namely, responding love, or, at least, harmless, innocent behaviour with cunning, blood-shed, servitude.—By the *double* is often denoted in the Old Testament *abundance.* The measure of the divine recompense corresponds both under the Old and under the New

1 A quite similar abbreviation with the same verb occurs in Lam. ii. 2 : *τὰ ὀχυρώματα ἐκόλλησεν εἰς τὴν γῆν,* Ps. xliii. 25 : *ἐκολλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν ἡ γαστὴρ ἡμῶν;* comp. Ps. cxviii. 25, *ἐκολλήθη τῷ ἐδάφει ἡ ψυχή μου.* Then in Baruch I. 20, *ἐκολλήθη εἰς ἡμᾶς τὰ κακά,* the evils that have come upon us and cleave to us. Also Zech. xiv. 5, *καὶ ἐγκολληθήσεται φάραγξ εὼς ἀζαήλ,* is only to be explained as an abbreviation, if we would not force on the verb the sense of *reaching* : it will join itself, reaching even to it.—The harshness of the construction has occasioned the reading *ἠκολούθησαν.*

2 Read *διπλώσατε διπλᾶ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῆς,* not with Stephanus: *διπλώσατε αὐτῇ διπλᾶ* ; still less with Tischendorf, *διπλώσατε τὰ διπλᾶ.* The variation has arisen from a misunderstanding. The double can only be the double of her works.

Testament, to the measure of guilt—comp. Ex. xxi. 24; Matth. vii. 2.—Scripture knows nothing of a *double* measure of *punishment* to a *single* one of guilt. In the expression also, *according to her works*, and in what immediately precedes, the recompense is placed in exact correspondence to the guilt. We must therefore suppose, that it is doubled to *her*, because she had doubled, because her works bore the character of aggravated wickedness, as in Jer. l. 21, ancient Babylon is called the land of double revolt (Merathaim), and Kushan of Mesopotamia has the surname of Rishathaim, the double wickedness—comp. also Matth. xxiii. 15. She has likewise mixed double in her cup. The fundamental passage is Jer. xvi. 18, "and I recompense double their iniquity and their sin;" comp. xvii. 18, "and with double destruction destroy them," where also we are not to think of a double recompense for a single sin, but of a double recompense for a double sin.—On the *mixing*, see on ch. xiv. 10, the only other passage in the Apocalypse where it occurs. In regard to the image of the cup with the wine of wrath, see ch. xiv. 8, xviii. 3.

Ver. 7. *How much she has made herself glorious, and has been luxurious, so much torment and sorrow give her. For she says in her heart, I sit as queen, and am no widow, and I shall not see mourning.* At the words, how much, etc., we are to supply, at the expense of others. The words, "for she says," &c., contain the reason for the heavy sentence against Babylon which was pronounced in the preceding verse. The reason is, the presumptuous security in which she trod beneath her feet all divine and human rights. All these words are still addressed to the ministers of the divine righteousness. But the address to them is only *formally* of moment. In substance the call, that they should render to her, is all one with, let it be rendered to her. The fundamental passage is Isa. xlvii. 8, where it is said of ancient Babylon, "who says in her heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children." By the widowhood is denoted not the loss of empire, but the state of desertion, helplessness, humiliation—comp. Lam. i. 20; Baruch iv. 12. Widows appear even in the law as representatives of *personae miserabiles*.

Ver. 8. *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and hunger, and with fire shall she be burned;*

for strong is God the Lord, who judges her. The *four* plagues are mentioned with respect to her glory upon the *earth*, being one, as it were, from every corner of the earth. *Death*—which carries off a great part of her people (the pestilence would here be out of place, since from what precedes it is death by the hand of enemies that is more especially referred to)—*mourning*, and *hunger*, which overtakes the survivors, and by which, therefore, she is smitten as the mother of all. In regard to the *burning*, comp. on ch. xvii. 16. *God the Lord* (comp. on ch. i. 8) is here very suitably mentioned as the author of the judgment. This name confronts the imagined goddess of the earth, whose name also was derived from *strength*, with the eternal possessor of Godhead as the rock on which her little bark must dash to pieces. Bengel: "Rome means strong, but her strength is nothing. Strong is the Lord God, who judges her."[1]

It has been improperly supposed, that ver. 9, ss. do not suit the voice from heaven. Yet the whole book is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ!" The difference between what is said here and in the preceding verses is only that, in place of a direct address, we have here a simple description; a difference of a merely formal kind, as under the address also a description was concealed. Besides, in the middle of ver. 14 an address is once more suddenly introduced, and in it the whole discourse of the voice from heaven runs out in ver. 20.

Ver. 9. *And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and have lived luxuriously with her, shall weep and lament over her, when they see the smoke of her burning.* Ver. 10. *And they shall stand afar off, for the fear of her torment, and shall say, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon the strong city. For in one hour is thy judgment come.*—In ver. 11 the kings of the earth have placed by their side the merchants of the earth, as contradistinguished from those who traffic on the seas; and the common contrast to both is formed at the close in ver. 20 by the heaven and its inhabitants. Earth and sea lament, heaven rejoices. The kings of the earth, as contrasted with the inhabi-

1 The Old Testament character of the designation "Lord the God" is opposed to those who leave out the κύριος, as also to those who omit the ὁ θεός. It is perfectly in keeping with the Apocalypse, and has in its favour the mark of originality; the copyists however, could not understand it.

tants of heaven, are, at the same time, to be thought of as *earthly minded*—comp. on ch. xiii. 11, 12.—The lamentation of the kings is not that of *love;* the opposite appears from the expression, "who have committed fornication with her;" it is the grief that arises from self-interest. They bewail the downfal of the mistress, because of the advantages which they, as faithful vassals, had derived from their connection with her.—With all the three, kings, merchants, mariners, it is mentioned that they stood afar off; with all the three the lamentation begins with the words, Woe, woe, the great city; and concludes with the words, because in one hour. So much belonging to the parts in common prevents the several representations from falling asunder, and marks them as so many pieces in one whole. Then, the particular features of each part are rendered more prominent by reason of the contrast they present to this common ground.—The fundamental passages are Ezek. xxvi. 15, 16, "Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, at the sighing of the pierced through, when they are slain within thee? And all the princes of the sea come down from their thrones, and lay aside their robes, and put off their broidered garments; they clothe themselves with terrors, they sit upon the ground, and tremble continually, and are astonished at thee;" and Ezek. xxvii. 35, "All the inhabitants of the earth are astonished at thee, and their kings are frightened, they are troubled at the thunder." As in former times Tyre, so in the times of St John Rome was the centre of the world's commerce. The joining of the word here to that which was of old uttered respecting Tyre, was more significant, as the fulfilment of this afforded a pledge of the certainty of the other.—They see the smoke of her burning, as Abraham, according to Gen. xix. 28, saw from afar the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah. In the superscription of Jeremiah's prophecy against ancient Babylon in ch. l. 1, "The word, which the Lord spake of Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans" (not: *and* the land), the land of the Chaldeans is mentioned along with Babylon; whence it is clear, that the city was referred to merely as the representative and centre of the kingdom. So here Babylon comprehends in itself the whole kingdom—comp. ch. xvii. 18. On this ground alone, therefore, we cannot take the burning literally, but must regard it as the emblem of the whole destruction.—*They stand afar off,* because they are

afraid that they shall partake of her sins and receive of her plagues (ver. 4.) It is not so properly their regard to self that is marked, disposing them to *forget* the sufferer, as the greatness of her punishment and suffering, which makes all shudder. It was impossible to think of rendering help, as the kings themselves perceive *(thy judgment)*, that it is the Almighty himself who now contends with Rome. The double woe corresponds to the call, "double her double," in ver. 6. In regard to the *great city*, see on ch. xvi. 19, the expression, *the strong city*, still more plainly alludes to the name of Rome. The *strong* is here, as in ver. 8, to be regarded as written large.

Ver. 11. *And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one any more buys their cargo.* The fundamental passages for this and the following verses are the prophecies of Isaiah in ch. xxiii., and of Ezekiel in ch. xxvii. against Tyre, especially the latter. As preparation is made for ver. 9, 10, by the declaration in ver. 3, "And the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her," so is it also made for ver. 11, ss. by the immediately following declaration, "and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the power of her luxury." Vitringa perceived quite well, that the features described here did not suit papal Rome, which was never at any period the centre of merchandize. He found refuge in the allegorical exposition. Rome appears as the storehouse of spiritual wares. But the one consideration, that the merchandize of Rome, different from that of Tyre, appears here as entirely of a *one-sided passive* kind, is decisive against this view: She does not sell the wares, but they merely serve for her use and consumption. The *cargo* (Luther translates, not quite exactly, *wares*, see Acts xxi. 3) is that of the ships freighted by the merchants.—In the following enumeration the wares are divided into different classes, making in all seven. The transition from one to another where it is not in itself quite plain, is rendered manifest by the construction: the cargo of gold, etc., and *all wood*, etc., and (the cargo) *of horses*, etc., and *souls* of men.

Ver. 12. *The cargo of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls; and of linen-stuff, and purple and silk and scarlet; and all thyine wood, and every kind of vessel of most precious wood, and of brass, and of iron, and of marble.* First come hard materials for show and ornament; then the *soft* (comp. xvii. 4)—

both placed at the head on this account, because Babylon was not, like Tyre, a common commercial city, but merely, as the mistress of the world, drew toward herself the merchandize of the world. In her love for these materials her character as mistress of the world especially discovers itself.—The hard materials of display are *four*—as indeed the number four, the signature of the earth, plays an important part in this chapter, which is occupied with the fate of the mistress of the world—gold and silver and precious stones and pearls. So also the *soft*. Purple and scarlet are the chief stuffs, according to ch. xvii. 4, as being the proper apparel of the dominant people. Silk and linen (byssus) appear only as accompaniments. Bengel: "The finest flax is called byssus, and is very fine, strong, and beautifully white, and beside it the purple, with its dark red, looks admirably, as the rich man in the parable well knew, who clothed himself with purple and fine linen (byssus.)"—Then follow the materials for expensive furniture, and furniture made from expensive materials. First we have, formed into a pair, the costly material itself, and the articles made from it; then four kinds of the articles or vessels. By the thyine wood we are not to understand things made of this kind of wood; for, in that case, it would have been superfluous to mention all vessels of precious wood.—*Thyine wood*, wood of the tree Thyia or Thya, (which is mentioned even in Homer in connection with cedars, Od. IV. 59) according to Pliny and Theophrastus was a fine-cented, ever-green tree from the coast of Africa, like the cypress, of the wood of which the costliest pieces of furniture were made. Schneider regards it as an unknown kind of juniper; according to Sprengel it is Thyia articulata, Linnæi.—In Athenaeus V. p. 207, thyine wood and ivory are connected together, as they are here: τὰς δὲ θύρας (εἶχε) ἐλέφαντος καὶ θυΐου.

Ver. 13. *And cinnamon (and amomum) and perfumes and ointment and frankincense, and wine and oil, and fine flour and wheat, and cattle and sheep; and of horses and of chariots and of bodies; and souls of men.* We have here first articles of perfumery. Whether amomum, an Indian aromatic shrub, stood originally in the text or not, is doubtful. It is omitted by Luther. If it is not genuine, then there are four aromatic substances. After these we have articles of food in three pairs.—Then come articles of conveyance. *Chariots*—of which Bengel says, "here

is the Latin rheda in the midst of the Greek words." *Bodies* as contradistinguished from *horses*, can only mean bodies of *men*. And being named in connection with horses and chariots, they can only be thought of in their capacity for *bearing*, and more especially for *bearing men*, as equipages of this sort are mentioned immediately before.—The *bodies* are by the construction united with the horses and chariots, and separated from *the souls of men*. However, they naturally lead on to this latter class. Slaves were brought into notice when mention was made emphatically of the body, in the special respect of sedan bearers, and now they are referred to in a more general respect, and under an appellation, which indicates their fitness for higher employments. *Men's souls* appear in Ezek. xxvii. 13 among the goods in which Tyre trafficked.

Ver. 14. *And the harvest of the desire of thy soul is departed from thee; and all that was full and glorious, has perished from thee, and thou shalt no longer find such things.* After the wares, which were brought from without, mention is made of domestic goods; then everything in the preceding enumeration is collected into the expression: all that was fat and glorious. The description of the mourning of the merchants is interrupted for a moment, to be again resumed in ver. 15. This interruption may seem the less strange, as the description also of the mourning on the part of the merchants is given for no other purpose than to shew, how completely all the glory of Rome had departed. This object comes still more prominently out through the interruption; which serves to point to the design and kernel of the whole representation. The address is directed by the voice from heaven to Babylon, which is also spoken to in ver. 22 by the *angel*, after he had previously spoken *of* her. The address can then only appear strange, when it is overlooked, that the whole uttered from ver. 4 to ver. 20 inclusive belongs to the voice from heaven.—By the *harvest* are here denoted the fruits, which ripen in harvest. Among these the first place belongs to the grapes, which were gathered with the greatest rejoicing ("the harvest of the desire of thy soul"), and which in the Old Testament representations occupy a distinguished place in accounts of ravages and desolations—comp. Isa. xvi. 9, "in thy reaping and thy harvest falls the enemy's cry," in contrast to the joy of the vine-dresser and reaper, Jer. xlviii. 32,

"the spoiler falls upon thy harvest and thy vintage."—The *full*, properly *fat*, used of the produce of the land, Isa. xxx. 23, comprehends the immediately preceding, and besides a part of the things enumerated in ver. 12, 13; the rest is comprised in the term *glorious*.—Bengel: "But so may it be said also in respect to all worldly people. What they have enjoyed before, is taken away in death, and perhaps even sooner, and they are left, it may be, without a drop of water. He, who has before doted upon such things with the whole desire of his heart, and now has in prospect only an eternal *starvation*, what courage any more can remain to him! It is better for one, by denying himself and the world, to wean himself from such things, and stand aloof; so that there may be no pain when the separation takes place. For such an one it may then be said, All that was distasteful to thy soul is past, all that was grievous and troublesome is gone; henceforth thou shalt no more have to do with such things."

Ver. 15. *The merchants of such wares, who have been enriched by her, shall stand afar off for fear of her torment, weeping and mourning.* Ver. 16. *(And) saying, Woe, woe, the great city, that was clothed with fine linen and purple and scarlet, and gilt with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour is so great wealth laid desolate.* Ver. 15 would possess the character of a needless repetition, if ver. 14, as several have supposed, stood in the wrong place. The expression, *such wares*, refers more immediately to the full and glorious in ver. 14.

Ver. 17. *And every shipmaster, and all who sail for one place, and sailors, and whosoever work the sea, stood afar off.* Ver. 18. *And cried, when they saw the smoke of her burning, and said, Who is like the great city!* The classes named are four. Those who sail for one place, are such as pursue a determinate course. Luther's translation: and the multitude, who do business in ships, rests on a false reading, πᾶς ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πλοίων ὁ ὄμιλος. The words, whosoever work the sea, comprehend all that are here under consideration. The figurative expression: work the sea, has its analogies in Isa. xxiii. 3, where the many waters appear as the harvest-field, which bears for Tyre the corn of Egypt, and Ezek. xxvii. 33, "when thy wares came forth out of the sea, thou didst satisfy many nations,"

Hitzig, "like the increase, the productions of the ground." The fundamental passage for the lamentation of the mariners is Ezek. xxvii. 32.—The exclamation: Who is like the great city! (comp. Isa. xlvii. 8, where Babylon says, "I am and none besides") explains itself on the ground, that it is of the nature of pain for lost greatness and glory, to call to mind the previous existence of the greatness and glory. Some explain: Who is like her in her destruction! But the destruction would require to be more definitely expressed. The likeness, therefore, can only be understood of that, which is affirmed of the city, its greatness. In the fundamental passage also of Ezek. xxvii. 32, "Who is like Tyre, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea," the reference is simply to the earlier glory. Who, it is asked, is like her in this?

Ver. 19. *And they threw dust upon their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, and said, Woe, woe, the great city, by which all were made rich, who have ships in the sea, from her costliness; for in one hour she is laid desolate.* In Ezek. xxvii. 30, it is said of the mariners, "And they cry aloud over thee, they lament bitterly, and throw dust upon their heads, and wallow in ashes." Dust and ashes, and whatever else lies on the dirty ground, is the symbol of a low and humbled condition. Any one that throws dust upon his head, denotes thereby, that a low and prostrate condition has overtaken him (comp. Ps. cii. 9.) On the words, "by which were made rich," see Ezek. xxvii. 33, "Thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise." The *costliness* is her pomp and glory, her luxurious mode of life.

Ver. 20. *Rejoice over her, Heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets, for God has judged your judgment on her.* This verse forms the close of what is said by the voice from heaven, to which all between this and ver. 4 belongs, without any interruption. That John himself in part appears as the speaker, is the less to be supposed, as in vision—understood in the closer sense—according to the rule, all is merely seen and heard; the Seer himself does not come forth as a speaker, no otherwise than in converse with his heavenly guide, and generally within the sphere of the vision—comp. at ch. xx. 7.—The *joy*

forms the contrast to the mourning of the earthly-minded over the downfal of Rome.—Upon *heaven* as the dwelling-place of the militant and triumphant church, see on ch. xii. 12, xiii. 6. Heaven was first named, in contrast to the *earth*, ver. 9, 11, and the *sea*, ver. 17; and now those inhabitants of heaven are specified, to whom the joy more especially belongs.—The *saints* are the genus, the apostles and prophets the most eminent species included in it—comp. on ch. xi. 18. The apostles and prophets are personally identical, or in the possessors of the apostleship prophecy also culminates—comp. on ch. i. 1. If the apostles were *diverse* from the prophets, the order would have stood thus: saints, prophets, apostles. For, that the order corresponds to the rank, appears by the transition from saints to apostles. But it is contrary to the essential nature of the apostleship, that other persons should stand higher in the kingdom of God than the apostles. Besides, this passage shews, that the prophetical dignity is highest in the apostles.—The apostles can only mean the *twelve*—comp. ch. xxi. 14. It has been urged, that since the apostles appear here as already in heaven, the author seems to have thought of himself as different from the apostles, and hence could not be the apostle John (Lücke, p. 389.) But in this the proper import of heaven is misapprehended. By ch. iv. 1, John was even in heaven when he saw the Revelation. Nay, if heaven were to be regarded only as the abode of the just made perfect, the conclusion would be an overhasty one. For by the time that the revenge should be executed, the still living saints, apostles, and prophets, must long since have gone to their rest.—*Your judgment* (comp. ch. xvii. 1, xx. 4), the doom which she pronounced upon you, the judgment which she held over you, your condemnation. To the judgment here corresponds in ch. vi. 10, "How long dost thou not judge our blood?"—the *blood* which the unrighteous persecutor had shed. Ch. xiii. 10 is parallel, "He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword." The doom or judgment of Rome was spoken of in ch. xiii. 7, where it is said of the beast in its Roman phase, "And it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." According to ver. 10 there, it has carried the saints away into captivity, as also, from ch. i. 9, John himself, the saints, apostles,

prophets, and killed them with the sword.—The saints respond to the çall which is here addressed to them, and express their joy in ch. xix. 1—4. Those also rejoice among the saints, etc., who were not *personally* affected by the judgment of Babylon. For, when one member suffers, the other members suffer with it. There is besides an allusion to Jer. li. 48, "and heaven and earth rejoice over Babylon."

Ver. 21. *And a strong angel lifted up a stone as a great mill-stone, and threw it into the sea, and said, Thus with violence shall Babylon the great city be thrown, and be no more found.* The symbolical action of the angel here is typified in Jer. li. Jeremiah gives to Seraiah, who was going to Babylon, the commission to read his prophecy there. Ver. 63, 64, "And when thou hast made an end of reading this book, thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the Euphrates. And say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her, but shall vanish away." An allusion is made here also to Matth. xviii. 6, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea;" and to the parallel passage in Mark ix. 42.[1] The allusion to these passages admits of less doubt, as here in ver. 20 it is mentioned immediately before, how Rome offends against the little ones that believe in Christ, and by its persecutions had tried to seduce them into apostacy. That word of our Lord, in which the doom of Rome was already announced, points back to the passage quoted from Jeremiah: it shall fare with him, as it once fared with Babylon, which so well understood how to offend against the little ones. In ch. i. 7 we have a quite similar reference to a declaration of our Lord preserved by St Matthew, and at the same time to its fundamental passage in the Old Testament. The declaration of Jeremiah, again, has reference to Ex. xv. 4, 5, comp. Neh. ix. 11. In this last fundamental passage it is said of Pharaoh and his host, "he

1 Mark has λίθος μυλικός instead of μύλος, which in the New Testament occurs only in these two passages in the rare signification of a *millstone*. He also omits the somewhat difficult ὀνικός, to which the μέγας here corresponds, which from the fundamental passages must be coupled with μύλον, and not with λίθον. But the ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν here comes nearer to Mark's βέβληται εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, than to the words of Matthew.

threw them into the sea, they sank down in the floods as a stone." In the place of the *sea* there Jeremiah substitutes the *Euphrates*. But in the declaration of our Lord the sea returns again; and on account of the immediate reference to his declaration, the sea is also found in the passage before us—although here Euphrates would have been quite suitable. The *strength* of the angel here has its pre-requisite in the greatness of the stone—comp. ch. v. 2. A great stone is taken, because such an one makes a great fall. With *violence*, with a heavy force, so that it may remain firmly settled at the bottom, and may no more be found.—Bengel: "This *no more* occurs here six times in rapid succession. Great glory before, great desolation afterwards." According to ch. xvii. 18, Rome is brought into view here only as "the great city," which has dominion over the kings of the earth—as the heathen mistress of the world. As such, it has completely, and without a trace, perished.

Ver. 22. *And the voices of the harp-singers, and musicians, and pipers, and trumpeters, shall no more be heard in thee; and no craftsman of any craft shall any more be found in thee; and the sound of a mill-stone shall no more be heard in thee.* Ver. 23. a. *And the light of a candle shall no more shine in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall no more be heard in thee.* In ver. 22—24 we have the speech of the strong angel continued, which serves as an explanation of his symbolical action. The fundamental passage here is Jer. xxv. 10, "And I destroy from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the mill-stones and the light of the candle;" comp. vii. 34; Isa. xxiv. 8; Ezek. xxvi. 13. The vanishing of all *joy* forms here the beginning and the end, the joy of marriage as the highest (Jer. xxxiii. 11), and in the middle there is the cessation of all commerce and life. The individuals chosen at the beginning as representatives of joy form two pairs, first the harp-singers (ch. xiv. 2) and the musicians, vocal and instrumental music; and again, of the latter, two related kinds are specified.

Ver. 23. b. *For thy merchants were the great of the earth. For by thy sorcery all the heathen have been deceived.* On the first words comp. Isa. xxiii. 8, where it is said of Tyre, "whose mer-

chants princes, whose traffickers the honourable of the earth." The merchants of Rome are here not the master-merchants in Rome itself, but the commercial people who deal with her. This is shown by the corresponding words in ver. 15, " the merchants of these things that have been made rich by her;" and still more those in ver. 3, " the merchants of the earth have become rich by the power of her luxury." The second *for* is not co-ordinate with the first, but carries back the immediately preceding declaration to what constitutes its ground. The proper guilt is first contained in this ground. That the merchandize with Rome produces so rich gain has its foundation in this, that she has drawn all nations into her net, and so all the world's treasures flow into her lap. What was said at ver. 3 against those who consider the luxury as the sole and sufficient cause of judgment upon Rome, may here be compared. Only such things are to be understood here as are characteristic of Rome, as " the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth," characteristic of a particular phase of the beast. That three quite different causes are given is in itself not probable. According to our view only two causes remain, and these have an internal connection with each other, as is already required by the parallel passages of ver. 3, and ch. xiv. 8, in which mention is made only of one crime of Babylon. From the same selfish ambition planting itself in the centre of the world, out of which proceeds the guilt spoken of in our verse, the second also in ver. 24 proceeds. She persecutes the church of Christ because this will not yield to her pretensions. The *sorcery* here, as in ch. ix. 21, comes into consideration, as the means by which injury is secretly done to a neighbour. It is the *bewitching guile* (as in Gal. iii. 1) by which Babylon drew the nations into her grasp, and compassed their destruction. Agreeing substantially as to the chief matter is the fornication, the deceitful and cunning policy of Babylon, which is mentioned in ch. xiv. 8, xviii. 3. Besides this, however, other sorcerous arts were also called into operation—comp. xiii. 12—15.—*Have been deceived,* for her deification and for their subjugation to her dominion—comp. ch. xiii. 14.

Ver 24. *And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all those who had been slain on the earth.* We are to compare Jer. li. 35, " My violence and my flesh comes upon Babylon,

saith the inhabitant of Zion, and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, saith Jerusalem;" and especially ver. 49, "Also Babylon shall fall slain, ye slain of Israel, also Babylon fall slain, ye slain of the whole earth." As there beside the slain of the whole earth, the slain of Israel are mentioned, so here we are to explain the "all who had been slain" as all the rest, *in* unison with ver. 23, according to which the evils inflicted by Babylon on the church stand connected with her ambitious striving to oppress all nations, or *generally* all, so that the prophets and saints are to be ranged as a part under the whole. In the prophet's time Rome was the great destroyer of men. In regard to the prophets and saints, see on ver. 20. The saints and witnesses of Jesus are mentioned in ch. xvii. 6. The blood is *in her*, because it has been shed by her.

Ch. xix. 1—4. In response to the call of the voice from heaven in ch. xviii. 20, *the church of the just made perfect here celebrates God's judgment on Rome.* First, the multitude of believers come forth praising and giving thanks in ver. 1—3. Then, in ver. 4, its heads and representatives, the four and twenty elders. These are joined by the four beasts, as representatives of all creatures on earth, that had fallen under the dominion of the oppressor of the world. With this full-toned conclusion, the subject of Rome's overthrow is brought to a close.

Ver. 1. *After these things I heard as a voice of a great multitude in heaven, who said, Hallelujah! The salvation, and the glory,*[1] *and the power is our God's.* The saints, who were called on to rejoice in ch. xviii. 20, that God had avenged their judgment on Babylon, here express their joy in an act of praise for this great display of his grace. Even from that passage it is clear of what elements the great multitude in heaven is composed, of saints with apostles and prophets at their head. We are led also to the same result by ver. 4, where the four and twenty elders appear as the kind of *elite* of the great multitude in heaven. To the church of the just made perfect belongs also the great voice in heaven, in ch. xii. 10. So also the great voice that said, in ch. xi. 15, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his anointed, and he will reign for

[1] The expression: and the praise, which is added in some MSS., and which Luther adopts, has been taken from ch. iv. 11.

ever and ever;" and the voice of the great multitude here in ver. 6. What more is to be understood of the great multitude is to be derived from ch. vii. 9: "After these things I looked, and behold a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands."—John hears *as* a voice of a great multitude. The *as*, which is wanting in Luther, here and in ver. 6 (as also in ch. iv. 6) points to the *visionary* character of the scene, and serves to distinguish between what was internally seen and the reality. The expression, "in vision," in ch. ix. 17, has a corresponding import. It is enough if only *here and there* allusion is made to the difference between the vision and the reality. In substance these allusions belong to the whole. The powerful voice of the great multitude did not actually sound, but there was only the likeness of it expressed to the mind of the Seer. That an *as* enters here essentially into the nature of the discourse is plain from the consideration that a victory is celebrated, which in the reality did not belong to the time then present, but to the distant future. In the reality the great voice only sounds then, when God has judged the great whore.—*Hallelujah* is found in the whole of the New Testament only here, where it occurs four times, in reference to the victory of God over the earth, the signature of which is four. It is borrowed from the Psalms, of which fifteen either begin or end with Hallelujah. In Ps. civ. 35 it has its original place; and there can scarcely be a doubt that allusion is here made especially to that passage. It is there said, "The sinners shall be consumed from the earth, and the wicked shall be no more. Praise the Lord, my soul, Hallelujah." The sinners are the wicked heathen host, that had gathered together against the Lord and his kingdom. By her hallelujah the church of the Lord, amid the great tribulations which she had to suffer from the world, had stirred herself up to faith and confidence; it was the shield which she held up against despair; and now with it the heavenly church celebrates the victory over one of the particular phases of the worldly power. The *triumphant* hallelujah looks back to that which was of old sung in the *vale of tears*. The preservation of the Hebrew word, as in the case also of Amen and Hosanna, serves like a visible finger-post to mark the internal

connection between the church of the New Testament and that of the Old, in like manner as the "vater unser," at which only an unchurch-like pedantry could take offence, points to the historical connection between the Christianity of Germany and that of the Latin church (Paternoster)—*The salvation*, etc. Amid the troubles of this life they had often *doubted*, whether salvation did then truly belong to their God. That the great whore with impunity destroyed the earth with her fornication, and was drunk with the blood of saints, seemed to be a mighty proof to the contrary. But now all these clouds are dispersed. The destruction of the destroyer, and the redemption therewith connected of the suffering church, has proved the Lord to be the only possessor of salvation. There is an allusion here, as at ch. vii. 10, to Ps. iii. 9, "Salvation is the Lord's." *There* the prayer is grounded upon this principle; *here* its answer is celebrated in the bestowal of salvation. But the whole doxology rests here upon the doxology of the Lord's prayer in Matth. vi. 13, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever, Amen;" for the genuineness of which this very passage affords decisive evidence, and shows that the omission in copies, certainly both numerous and important, only arose from its having been omitted by Luke, and from the immediately following context apparently being such as to render a concluding formula out of place. There redemption out of evil is grounded in the power and glory of God, here the power and glory are deduced from the redemption out of evil. We have here the same use of the *three* as there, only instead of the *kingdom*, which still had not fully come into being, there stands here anticipatively *salvation*. But the allusion to the kingdom follows in ver. 6, as also in ver. 3 there is the *for ever*, and the *Amen* in ver. 4. The inverting of the order of the words, "the glory and the power," is in itself a matter of small moment. But the other arrangement: the power and the glory, has here also important authorities on its side. The allusion to Matth. vi. 13 has also on its side the analogy of the reference to Ps. iii. 8; grant us salvation, for salvation is thine—thine is the salvation, for thou hast granted us salvation; deliver us from the evil, for thine is the power and the glory—thine is the power and the glory, for thou hast delivered us from evil. So, too, is the analogy of the hallelujah, which is

also taken from the mouth of the militant church. Then, there is the fact, that even in ch. xii. 10 there is an allusion to the doxology of the Paternoster. After the completion of the work of redemption a loud voice there proclaims in heaven, "Now is come the salvation and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." The realization of the doxology in the Paternoster is there anticipated by faith. Here it has in part entered in the reality, only the kingdom, the dominion still awaits its full realization. There, too, a three number. While the *glory* is wanting there, here the kingdom is wanting. There is, again, an allusion to the doxology in ch. xi. 15, where the great voice proclaims from heaven, "The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of the Lord, and of his anointed, and he will reign for ever and ever." The expression *it has become* there, rests upon the *it is* of the Lord's prayer. Finally, we should be the less disposed to resist the idea of an allusion here to the first Gospel, since such allusions pervade the whole of the Apocalypse—see, for example, at ch. i. 7, ii. 7, iii. 3, 5, vi. 12, xi. 11—13, xiv. 11, xviii. 21. An allusion specially to Matthew was the more natural here, as among the three first Gospels this of the fellow-apostle of John, everywhere occupies the foreground in the Apocalypse; which is a remarkable fact, and fraught with important results. From the *thine is* in the fundamental passage, we are here also not to render: the salvation, etc. *be*, but must understand, *is*. So also, the reading, *of our God*, is shewn by the fundamental passage to be the correct one, in opposition to the reading: God the Lord, κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ, which besides has little external support. The word shoved in by Luther also—the praise—is against the fundamental passage.

Ver. 2. *For true and righteous are his judgments, for he has judged the great whore, that corrupted the earth with her fornication, and avenged the blood of his servants out of her hand.* The truth and righteousness of God's judgments (comp. ch. xvi. 7, also xv. 3), lays the foundation for his being the sole possessor of salvation; his glory and his power, and the general principle, that his judgments are true and righteous, is again established through the true and righteous judgment, which he has executed upon Rome. It is characteristic of true piety to draw the general from the particular, out of facts to provide for itself

ladders on which it rises to instructive, consolatory, edifying truths.—In regard to the great whore and her fornication, that is, the cunning policy, by which she sought to bring the world and Christians to destruction, comp. on ch. xiv. 8, xvii. 1, 2. In regard to the expression, *that corrupted the earth*, comp. on ch. xi. 18, "and to corrupt (destroy) those that corrupted (destroyed) the earth." The fundamental passage is Jer. li. 25, where it is said to ancient Babylon, "Behold I am against thee, thou corrupting mountain, saith the Lord, who dost corrupt the whole earth,"—the mountain, a symbol of the mighty kingdom. From this fundamental passage, which itself refers to Gen. vi. 11—13, it is plain, we are not to think of *moral* corruption.—The clause, "he has avenged the blood of his servants out of her hand," intimates, that the offence, of which the faithful had complained in ch. vi. 10, is now set aside. We should compare 2 Kings ix. 7, "And I avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord out of the hand of Jezebel." Along with the resemblance of the matter, the peculiar expression, *out of the hand*, is a satisfactory proof, that allusion is made primarily to this passage, and only through the medium of it to Deut. xxxii. 43, "He avenges the blood of his servants." *To avenge out of the hand*, is spoken with similar pregnancy to that in ch. xv. 2, "to conquer out of the beast." So long as the blood remained unavenged, she had it, as it were, in her hand, under her power. By means of the revenge it is withdrawn from her.

Ver. 3. *And they spake a second time, Hallelujah, and her smoke goes up for ever.* That is repeated, which was designed to be made emphatic and strong; comp. Ps. lxii. 11, "God has spoken one word, and there are two, that I have heard," Job xxxiii. 14, "Once God speaks, and twice, though it is not thought upon." Here the repetition points to the greatness of the fact, which is not attended merely with a momentary result; so that it goes hand in hand with the addition, "her smoke goes up for ever and ever." Similar is Ex. xv. 21, where, after the overthrow of Pharoah with his host, the oldest type of the overthrow of Rome, Miriam utters a second time with the chorus of women, what Moses had said the first time with the men, "Sing to the Lord, for he has done a glorious deed, man and horse has he thrown into

the sea ;" and thus the fact becomes stamped, as it were, with the seal of completion.—The *and* joins to that, which in ver. 1 and 2 follows after the Hallelujah, and which is repeated here in thought, though not in words. We are not to suppose, that the heavenly voices only utter the Hallelujah the second time ; and that the words, "and her smoke," etc., are added by the prophet. For he describes only what he hears and sees, and restrains himself from introducing any such intermixture of his own ; which would be the more unsuitable here, as the heavenly song of praise is only concluded in ver. 4.—In Isa. xxxiv. 9, 10, it is said of Edom, the type of the ungodly heathen world, " Her land shall be burning pitch, day and night it shall not be extinguished, its smoke shall go up for ever and ever." This fundamental passage shews, that here ch. xviii. 9, 18 is to be compared, and not ch. xiv. 11, where everlasting fire is used as an image of the torments of hell.

Ver. 4. *And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down, and worshipped God that sat upon the throne, and said, Amen, Hallelujah.* The four and twenty elders, the heavenly representatives of the church, their elite as it were, stand forth, because the multitude of believers had begun the song of praise, and the flock cannot be separated from their shepherds ; and also because the point of view from which the matter is contemplated is that of the revenge of God for the blood of his servants. The four beasts follow, the representatives of the living creation upon earth (see in ch. iv. 6), to present their thanksgivings for the redemption of the earth, which the great whore had corrupted by her fornication —comp. Isa. xiii. 7, where it is said in regard to the overthrow of old Babylon, " the whole earth is at rest, is quiet, they break forth into jubilee." We may, perhaps, here as in ch. v. 8, regard the elders as the only speakers—comp. however ch. v. 14, where the four beasts utter a similar Amen, as also the angels in ch. vii. 12.—In ch. xi. 15, ss. also, precisely as here, the multitude of believers first step forth, and then the company of elders. But there is this difference, that here the heavenly representatives of the church only *assent*, while there the theme merely indicated by the multitude of believers is expanded by them. The Amen, Hallelujah, is from Ps. cvi. 48.

The Amen, Hallelujah, forms the conclusion of the extended and important announcement of the Seer upon the fate of heathen

Rome. On this point we have a few additional remarks to make.

That by Babylon, and by the great whore, *heathen* Rome is denoted, was understood even in the earlier ages of Christianity, during the dominion of Rome itself, and while the fulfilment was in progress; and that, not merely here and there, but by all who followed generally the historical exposition.

Irenæus, in B. V. c. 30, on the ground of this interpretation, expects the partition of the Roman empire among the ten kings. Tertullian says, that Babylon is with John the figurative designation of the city Rome, which was as great as ancient Babylon, equally proud in respect to her dominion, and equally, too, a persecutor of the saints of God.[1] Lactantius says, with evident allusion to the Apocalypse, that the announcements of the prophets foretold, under the veil of another name, the immediately approaching downfal of Rome.[2] Jerome always remains consistent with himself, in understanding by Babylon, the great whore of the Apocalypse, the Rome of his own day. It was not in his view an exegetical conjecture, but he considered it as a matter quite established, and generally recognized.[3] Orosius in B. II. c. 1, represents the Roman state as the antitype and continuation of the Babylonian, and pursues the parallel between the two farther, in ch. ii. and iii., and in B. VII. c. 2. The testimony of Berengaudus was given formerly.

Here we must examine a natural objection to this view, of which no notice has been taken in the preceding exposition. Rome, it is said, at the time of the overthrow of her dominion,

[1] Adv. Mar. III. c. 13: Sic et Babylon etiam apud Johannem nostrum Romanae urbis figura est, proinde magnae et regno superbae et sanctorum dei dibellatricis. So also adv. Jud. c. 9.

[2] Instit. L. VII. c. 15, sect. 17: Quod si haec ita sunt, quid restat nisi ut sequatur interitus senectutem? et id futurum brevi, conciones prophetarum denunciant sub ambage aliorum nominum, ne facile quis intelligat. Comp. s. 11: Romanum nomen, quo nunc regitur orbis (horret animus dicere, sed dicam quid futurum est) tolletur de terra.

[3] So he says in the epistle, which in the year 386 he wrote in the name of Paula and Eustochium to Marcella, in order to warn her to flee from Rome to Bethlehem (epist. 46): Lege Apocalypsin Joannis, et quid de muliere purpurata, et scripta in ejus fronte blasphemia, septem montibus, aquis multis, et Babylonis cantetur exitu, contuere. Exite, inquit dominus, de illa, populus meus, et ne participes sitis delictorum ejus, et de plagis ejus not accipiatis. See also his Comm. on Isa. xxiv., where he speaks of the spiritual Babylon, whose judgment is described in the Apocalypse of John.

had already *renounced* her heathenism. Is it credible, that God would have punished *Christian* Rome for the sins that had been committed by *heathen* Rome?[1]

We remark, first of all, on the other side, that at the period when the judgment here announced *began* to be executed, heathenism still reigned uncontrolled in Rome, and that it continued to have a deep root there when the prophecy was actually going into fulfilment, when nothing but the shadow remained of the old dominion and glory. Constantine despaired of getting heathenism properly extirpated in Rome, and transferred the seat of empire to Byzantium, (see Gieseler's History I. 2, p. 7.) In the days of Jerome heathenism still had the ascendancy in Rome; and according to his commentary on the epistle to the Galatians, Rome was the capital of all superstition—comp. on ch. iv. 3. The Christian zeal of Theodosius was not able to reach its end in Rome, (Gieseler, p. 29.) Even in the fifth century it was still the centre of heathenism.[2]

But farther, even with the formal conversion of Rome to Christianity, it did not cease to be the object of the judicial agency of God delineated in this prophecy. For that conversion was in great part a merely external one. The sinful corruption, that had established itself in the time of Rome's supremacy, continued to work still. It had penetrated so deeply, that the state, as such, was no longer capable of regeneration, and the renewing power of Christianity could take effect only on individuals. The overthrow of the Roman state itself shews this.

1 This point was raised even by Berengaudus on ch. xvii. 8: Sed dicet aliquis, Quomodo per mulierum meretricem Romani designantur, cum illis temporibus, quando hae gentes diversas clades generi humano intulerunt, Romani Christiani exstiterint. Substantially, too, he gave the right answer: Ad quod nos respondemus, quia per mulierem meretricem non electi, qui ex eadem gente fuerunt, intelliguntur, quippe mundi gloriam pro amore gloriae coelestis contemserunt: sed reprobi sive pagani sive christiani fuerint. Illorum ergo potestas ab iis gentibus destructa est, qui impia dominatione genus humanum premebant.

2 How powerful the heathenish element was at Rome in still later times, strikingly appears from what Orosius relates, in B. VII. c. 38, of the attempt made against Rome by the Goths under Rhadagaisus: Hoc igitur Romanis arcibus imminente, fit omnium paganorum in urbe concursus, hostem adesse cum utique virium copia, tum maxime praesidio deorum potentem: Urbem autem ideo destitutam et mature perituram, quia deos et sacra perdiderit. Magnis querelis ubique agitur et continuo de repetendis sacris celebrandisque tractatur. Fervent tota urbe blasphemiæ, vulgo nomen Christi tanquam lues aliqua praesentium temporum opprobriis gravatur.

This could not have happened, if the state had undergone a real revival through the Gospel. The same, too, is abundantly proved by the testimonies of those, who lived in Rome during the execution of the divine judgments.[1] Materials of another kind had to be sought for the formation of a *Christian* state; and these presented themselves in the people of the ten kings of the Apocalypse, the Germanic tribes.

But that in the midst of the divine judgments, which alighted on the whole Roman state, as being now incapable of deliverance and full of corruption, the protecting grace of God should manifest itself in the case of individuals—this was expressly announced beforehand in the Apocalypse. For it contains an address, in ch. xviii. 4, to the people of Christ, who might be in Rome. At the same time in this book a veil is spread over the future existence of a Christian Roman state, which is to be explained on the ground, that this state was not to be a truly Christian one. That the grace of God, however, did really manifest itself in the way of granting deliverances, may be proved from many remarkable facts in history.[2] To this also it is to be ascribed, that amid the full and complete destruction, which in accordance with the prophecy befel Rome, in her imperial power and majesty, as the great whore, "the great city, which had dominion over the kings of the earth," still the city itself, which was so often on the brink of entire destruction, continued to stand. It was otherwise with ancient Babylon, whose place can now hardly be discovered, because it possessed none of God's people.

1. We have a striking picture of the corrupt state of Rome, especially in the work of Salvianus, composed in the first half of the fifth century, de gub. dei. In B. VI. c. 14, he says: Quae spes Christianis plebibus ante deum est, quandoquidem ex illo tempore in urbibus Romanis haec mala non sunt, ex quo in Barbarorum jure esse coeperunt? Ac per hoc vitiositas et impuritas quasi germanitas quaedam est Romanorum hominum et quasi mens atque natura, quia ibi praecipue vitia ubicunque Romana. In B. VII. p. 134: Prope idem omnes, paene unus gurges, omnium gula; paene unum lupanar omnium vita. See also p. 137, and again, p. 155: Minime mirum est, si respublica Romana aliquando patitur quod jamdudum meretur. Haec impuritas in Romanis et ante Christi evangelium esse coepit, et, quod gravius est, nec post Evangelia cessavit.

2 Orosius says, in B. II. c. 3: Hic et Christiani fuerunt qui parcerent, et Christiani proper quorum memoriam et in quorum memoria parceretur. And again, in B. VII. c. 39, in regard to the taking of Rome by Alarich: Adest Alaricus, trepidam Romam obsidet, turbat, irrumpit. Dato tamen praecepto prius, ut si qui in sancta loca praecipueque in sanctorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli basilicas confugissent, hos imprimis inviolatos securosque esse sinerent.

What was historically realized in the course of centuries is in the prophecy compressed into one scene. This prophetical mode of representation was not understood by many of the older expositors, who perceived that imperial Rome was the object of the threatening. Overlooking the difference between prophecy and history, they supposed, that in the history some single event was to be pitched upon, which the Seer must have had in his eye. Thus Grotius points to the taking of Rome under Attila, Bossuet to the taking of Rome under Alarich. While they thus set in the place of the whole process that developed itself in the history of the world a single section of the process, they gave to the advocates of the view, which refers all to the Papacy, an important advantage, which these understood well how to employ. See Vitringa, for example, in his closing remarks on ch. xviii. With *such* weapons, the interpretation that applied the prophecy to Papal Rome, was not to be driven from the field.

Ch. xix. 5—10. In these verses we have the porch to the building of ch. xix. 11—xx. 1—15. A voice from the throne, the voice of the Lord of the church, calls upon the whole people of God to praise him, ver. 5. The church of the Lord responds to this call; by faith anticipating what is to come, she rejoices in the thought, that the kingdom of God has entered, that the marriage of the Lamb has come, that the bride appears in suitable apparel, ver. 6—8. The angel who stood at the side of St John, affirms the truth of the facts, which form the theme of the heavenly song of praise, ver. 9. John is gladdened by this glorious message, testifies his profound regard to him, who had communicated it on behalf of himself and the church, and the angel returns his acknowledgment, ver. 10.—We cannot here think of a continuation of the preceding song of praise, which was raised over the destruction of Babylon, seen in vision as already accomplished. For, apart from the difference in the contents, the preceding scene was brought to a proper close. But we find in other parts of the Apocalypse songs of praise, which anticipate what is to come, comp. xv. 2—4, xi. 15—18.

Ver. 5. *And a voice went out of the throne and said, Praise our God, all his servants, and ye that fear him, small and great.* According to ch. xvi. 17, the *voice from the throne* can only belong to him, who sits upon the throne. We cannot understand

it of God the Father, as appears from the call, "Praise our God." So that the voice must be the voice of Christ, who, according to ch. v. 6, occupies the space between the throne with the beasts, and the elders; according to ch. vii. 17, is in the midst of the throne; according to ch. iii. 21, sits with his Father on his throne; whence the throne is to be regarded as that of God and of the Lamb, ch. xxii. 1, 3. We are also led to refer the voice to Christ by comparing ch. xiv. 1, where we find the company of the saints in an act of adoration gathered around their Saviour after the attainment of victory; and by ch. xv. 3, where the Lamb sings with his people the song of redemption. *It becomes the author of salvation to his people to call upon them to give thanks for it.*—The voice cannot be attributed to the cherubim, not merely because they are not upon the throne, but because from their whole position they are not properly qualified for addressing such a call.—It is of especial importance to note, that the voice of Christ proceeded from the throne, as this betokened, that he is equal to God in power and glory. The preceding song celebrated a salvation, which, as exhibited in the vision, had already been accomplished. Here a still higher salvation must be celebrated, which is contemplated even in the vision as future, and only begins by and bye to unfold itself in the portions that follow. The security, that this anticipative song of praise belongs to another sphere than that of pleasant dreams, could only be afforded by the true and proper Godhead of Christ. As the God of Jesus Christ (comp. ch. iii. 12) and of his saints (comp. the declaration in John xx. 17, "I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God"), God manifests himself in the most glorious manner, by conducting the church through the severest conflicts to victory and final glorification.[1] In regard to the words, "all his servants and ye who fear him, small and great," comp. on ch. xi. 18.

Ver. 6. *And I heard as a voice of a great multitude, and as a voice of many waters, and as a voice of loud thunder, saying, Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty has taken*

[1] The correct reading is τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν; comp. the הודו לו in Ps. c. 4, and especially Ps. cvi. 1, where the Hallelujah is coupled with הודו ליהוה. The LXX. have often αἰνεῖν with the dative; for ex. in 1 Chron. xvi. 36, xxiii. 5. The reading of τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν has arisen merely from an ignorance on the part of copyists regarding the Hebraism.

the kingdom. Bengel: "Here is the accomplishment of what was called for in ver. 5." On the words, "as a voice of many waters and as a voice of loud thunder," see at ch. xiv. 2. In regard to the *βασιλεύειν*, to reign = to take the government, see at ch. xi. 17. The full realization of the word is to be found at the close of ch. xx. For, there we see all hostile powers lying prostrate in the dust. The subject of the church's song of praise is twofold; first that the Almighty has entered on the kingdom, (this *here*), and then that the marriage of the Lamb is come (in ver. 7 and 8.) The first is the *negative* side; the foundation of the dominion of God is the overthrow of the enemies (comp. on ch. i. ver. 6); the second is the *positive.* As soon as the enemies of God are cast down, the glorification of the church breaks forth. Before this, immediately after the atonement of Christ, it is said in ch. xii. 10, "Now is come the kingdom of our God." What existed there in the germ must now be developed and unfolded, and it is here anticipated in respect to this state of coming development and unfolding. Ch. xi. 17, is directly parallel. We have here no "new stage of what was announced there;" cannot possibly have it, as there already a time was spoken of, when not merely a particular phase of the worldly power, but this power itself was to fall under the heavy stroke of the Lord. There, however, the general plan only was announced, and here we have the plan filled up.

Ver. 7. *Let us be glad and rejoice and give him the glory; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready.* The words: let us rejoice and be glad, seem to allude to those of our Lord in Matt. v. 12, (comp. 1 Pet. iv. 13.) To give honour or glory to God, is as much as, to *ascribe* it to him, to acknowledge it as existing—comp. on ch. iv. 9, xi. 13, xvi. 9. On this very account, to give glory, is at the same time, to give *the* glory; that glory, namely, which God has manifested in the great events now under consideration.—That we must distinguish between the *arrival* of the marriage and its *celebration,* appears from the added clause, "and his wife has made herself ready." If the wife has first made herself ready, then the wedding cannot yet have begun. As to the future, the song of praise merely anticipates what lies within the limits of this group. But the group reaches no farther than to the immediate approach of

the wedding. The solemnity itself belongs to what comes after. The marriage is come, whenever the wedding-day has *dawned*.—Here, as always in the New Testament, where the relation of Christ to his church is represented under the image of a bridegroom, as in John iii. 29, there is a reference to the song of Solomon (comp. on ch. iii. 20.)—The marriage here is not the marriage-*feast*, as Vitringa falsely infers from ver. 9. Here, where the subject of discourse is the Lamb and his wife, or the church in its entire fulness, the marriage is in its proper place. There, where individual believers are spoken of, it is fitly the marriage-*supper*. Ver. 9 alone shews, that γάμος here is the marriage itself.—As over the transcendent future manifestation of the glory of God there may be descried the quiet and concealed glory, which he exhibits even in the times of the militant church, his reigning now in *the midst* of his enemies, so there is implied here the *close internal connection*, which Christ has with his church from the first foundation of it onwards through every dark and troubled age—comp. Matt. xxviii. 20, "I am with you always even to the end of the world," which contains in the background the surpassing display of glory, that is to be made to the triumphant church. *It is as if he then first brought home his bride.* In Matt. ix. 15, also the time, that stretches from the death of Christ to his return, appears as a time of *absence* for the bridegroom. In the parable of the ten virgins the return of the bridegroom is in the first instance *expected*. According to 2 Cor. xi. 2, the marriage of Christ to his bride, the church, is only to take place in the future. In Eph. v. 25—27, the church is represented as a bride adorned for a future marriage. We may learn from ch. xiii. 8, the reason why Christ appears here under the name of the *Lamb*. It is in Christ's sacrifice, in his bloody atonement, that his whole relation to the church has its root, that the state of glory also has its root, to which he leads them. The anticipative character of this doxology discovers itself here quite plainly. *Here the marriage is already at the very door.* But it is only in ch. xxi. 2, that the new Jerusalem comes into view, prepared and adorned as a bride for her husband. *We are here, therefore, already beyond the victory of the ten kings, beyond the thousand years, beyond the last victory over Gog and Magog.* Those, who fail to perceive the anticipative character

of the song, are driven to such constrained suppositions as the following—that the subject of discourse here is not properly the marriage union with the Lamb, but only an "antepast for the justified."—The wife of the Lamb has made herself *ready*. In a looser sense, the *betrothed* was sometimes called the wife of the bridegroom—comp. Deut. xxii. 24; Gen. xxix. 21; Matth. i. 20; and here, ch. xxi. 9, "Come, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." The making ready has respect to the *worthy reception of the bridegroom*. To make ready for the coming of the bridegroom, is represented in the parable of the ten virgins, as the great object of the church during the whole time that was to elapse between the first and the second appearance of the Lord. And, according to the parable, the preparation consists especially in having oil in the lamp—the emblem of the Holy Spirit—that is, in having the name of Christian, an *anointed* one, as something more than a mere name. Special allusion is made here to Matth. xxv. 10. Only those who were ready, went in with the bridegroom to the marriage.

Ver. 8. *And it was given to her to be arrayed in a clothing of fine linen, shining, pure. For the linen are the righteousnesses of the saints.* After the expression, "it was given to her," we might suppose, that by the white clothing here was denoted the glory, which the bride was to receive as the reward of her preparation—comp. ch. vi. 11. But the impartation of the *completed* glory, which alone could be thought of here, lies beyond the limits of this group. The *pure*, added to the *shining*, points to the distinction between *washing* and *making white* in ch. vii. 14. And all doubt is removed by the explanation given, which informs us that by the shining and white linen clothing is meant, not the *glory* of the saints, but their excellencies. The reference to the activity of the bride in the work of preparation was already mentioned in the declaration, "She has made herself ready." So that here the *other* side of the matter might fitly be exhibited. In ch. iii. 18, also (comp. vii. 14), where the white garments likewise denote Christian excellencies, the communication of the excellencies is spoken of as a gift of grace from God. In Eph. v. 25—27, the entire preparation of the church as the bride of Christ, is represented as proceeding from Christ. The wedding garment, too, in Matth. xxii. 12, has respect to the spiritual

preparation that is required. Accordingly, what is mentioned here, stands related to the entire preparation as a part to the whole.—The *shining* denotes the *glory* of the holy life of the righteous; the *pure*, their freedom from sin, their blameless and unspotted character. From the explanation subjoined the linen-clothing signifies the *righteousnesses*[1] of the saints. The rule of justice and rectitude for the saints, according to Matth. v. 17, is the law of Moses. The clothing is elsewhere the symbol of men's state—comp. ch. vii. 14. By the righteousnesses, therefore, though primarily they denote particular actions, there is yet indicated here the whole moral condition, of which those particular actions are the outward expression. But let no one imagine, that there can be the *condition* of a righteous person, where the actions are wanting.—Allusion is made to ch. xviii. 12, 16, comp. xvii. 4, where the clothing of the great whore is described. There the fine linen is also mentioned, but along with it the much-assuming and much-speaking scarlet and purple, and all, too, bespangled with gold and gems and pearls—the signs and indications of a false pomp, (1 Pet. iii. 3; Grotius: Cultus est gravis ut matronæ, non pompaticus qualis meretricis antea descriptæ.) The words: and his wife, as far as the end of ver. 8, have also the import of an impressive admonition. Still, that is not the most important element; nor the most prominent, which is rather the tendency of what is spoken to administer consolation. The hardest temptation is that, which calls forth the question, who then can be saved; and the most precious promise is that which assures the church, that in spite of all the infirmities of the flesh, in spite of all temptations and assaults, she shall still be found in a condition, wherein she shall be counted worthy to meet the Lord at his coming, (comp. on ch. xiv. 1—5.)

Ver. 9. *And he says to me, Write, Blessed are they that are called to the marriage feast of the Lamb. And he says to me, These words are true,* (they are the words) *of God.*[2] That the speaker is an angel, appears from ver. 10. We can think only

1 Δικαίωμα, the right or righteously made, signifies first a *legal decision* made in accordance with the rule of what is just and right, then an *action* in accordance with the same rule of what is just and right. So, in ch. xv. 4, then in Rom. v. 16, 18; see Rothe's Versuch über Rom. v. 12—21, p. 101.

2 From the parallel passage, ch. xxii. 6, we are inclined to give the preference to the reading οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι ἀληθινοί εἰσι τοῦ θεοῦ. The *true* is here, as there, a predicate. To the *second* predicate there, πιστοί, corresponds here the τοῦ θεοῦ, these

of the angel mentioned in ch. xvii. 1. For since then no other angel has spoken to John; and it is the same also, who in ch. xxi. 9 shews him the bride, the Lamb's wife. In regard to the special commission to *write*, see on ch. xiv. 13. The *blessedness* pronounced on those, who are invited, carries in its bosom a *woe* to such as are not (comp. Luke xiv. 24 with ver. 14; Matth. xxv. 12;) so that the words, "blessed are they," etc. contain a stringent admonition to put away with fear and trembling whatever might stand in the way of the admonition.—The church is the bride; its individual members appear here, after the example of Matth. xxii., 1, ss., xxv. 10, comp. ix. 15, as the guests, who are bidden to the marriage feast, and are thus admitted to a participation in the joy of the wedding.—The declaration, "Blessed are they who are called to the marriage feast of the Lamb," corresponds to that in ch. xiv. 13, "Blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord from henceforth." There the blessedness has respect to the blessedness of *heaven*. The "from henceforth" forms the contrast to the *completion* of God's kingdom; *even now*, not afterwards merely in the new Jerusalem. Here we have the second stage of blessedness.—By the second "and he says to me" what follows is intentionally cut off from what immediately precedes.—The expression, "these words," or sayings, can only refer to ver. 5—8. For the plural alone decides against the reference to the "Blessed are they," etc. The announcement, *also*, of the marriage of the Lamb is given there too indirectly; and the benediction by itself needs no confirmation. The things meant are *the great and consolatory truths of the coming of the Lord's kingdom, of the marriage of the Lamb, of the suitable preparation of the bride and her appearance in the bright and pure linen-attire of righteousness*. These truths have been communicated in the form of a song of praise by the church of the just made perfect. But this was only the *visionary form*, as

sayings are true (they are the sayings) of God. The reading: οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι οἱ ἀληθινοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσίν, seems to possess the character of a kind of solution. That the τοῦ θεοῦ here takes the place of πιστοί in ch. xxii. 6, is plain also from the observation of Bengel, that the ἀληθινός in the Revelation is only here put *alone*, always elsewhere in connection with πιστός (comp. iii. 14, xix. 11, xxi. 5), or some other epithet. The passage, too, ch. xxii. 5, serves as a confirmation of the reading we prefer; it shews that the article was shoved in before ἀληθινοί by the copyists: καὶ λέγει μοι· γράψον ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοί εἰσι. This passage and ch. xxii. 6 are of more importance in determining the right reading here, as the three passages are very closely related.

is plainly indicated by the expression, "*as* a voice," in ver. 6. Substantially, they were the sayings of God, or the divine revelations, which had been imparted to the prophet by the mediation of the angel—comp. on ch. i. 1.—The emphatic assurance given of the truth and credibility of what was spoken implies that here great and glorious things are referred to, which run counter to sight and reason. When the church lies prostrate on the ground, and the world triumphs, it is indeed hard to believe that the glory of God is yet to find its absolute realization. When Christ seems to have altogether cast off his church, the whole authority of God is needed to fill it with joyful thoughts of a wedding-season. And when it is obliged to utter the complaint, Ah! my sin is ever before me! it can only believe on God's sure word of promise what is said here of being made ready.

Ver. 10. *And I fell before him at his feet to worship him. And he says to me: See thou, do it not! I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren, who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.* The angel was to John the mediator, who communicated the joyful message from the sovereign majesty of God, respecting the marriage of the Lamb and the preparation of the bride for it. John forgets, that he also had an important place in this communication for the church, and that without the Spirit of prophecy dwelling in him, the pre-requisite condition of which was his apostleship, the angel should have made it in vain. What John in his humility had forgotten, is the very thing which the angel in *his* humility brings out. Both, therefore, fulfil the word of Paul in Rom. xii. 10, "in honour preferring one another." The contest between Jesus and the Baptist in Matth. iii. 14 is quite similar. As there *both* was in its place—the will of Jesus to let himself be baptized by John, and the declinature at first of the Baptist, who forgot the dignity of his office and looked only to the surpassing dignity of Jesus (though he very well knew, that his declinature could not be allowed by Jesus)—so also here both the worship of John and the "See thou do it not" of the angel are in their place. We may compare Acts x. 25, 26, where Cornelius falls down before Peter, while Peter raises him up and says, "Stand up, for I also am a man." There, too, both is in keeping. It was becoming in Cornelius to take

into view the surpassing dignity of Peter, in whose person the church was represented, and to fulfil the word spoken in Isa. xlix. 23; it was becoming in Peter to give expression to the other side of the matter, that of the equality of all men before God, the common ground or basis on which individual differences rise.—The worship was offered here, as well on account of the information already imparted, as on acconnt of the farther enlargement to be confidently expected after this general plan. There is a correspondence between the worship here and that in ch. xxii. 8, 9. What the worship here anticipates, is there devoutly and thankfully contemplated as finished. This anticipative character of the worship here is a simple consequence of the anticipative character of the song of praise. Bengel quite improperly remarks, "It appears, that John had taken the word of the angel, 'These are the true sayings of God,' for the conclusion of the whole vision; that he had for a good while contemplated the worship and now sought to perform it." It is quite natural that John should present his adoring thanks at the first, though still only brief and preliminary communication of these soul-refreshing facts; the more natural the more clearly he apprehended its preliminary character.—As John here did homage to the angel, so it becomes the church, which receives through John this glorious revelation, to bow before him on account of it, as also it behoves John to say to her, See thou do it not.—It is manifest, that the worship, which John paid, could imply no slight on the divine prerogative, both from the personal character of St John, and from the very tender and almost imploring tone of the angel's dissuasion. The common distinction between the *civil* and the *religious* proskynesis (worship) is not well grounded. The *true* distinction lies between the proskynesis, which is due to God, whether paid *directly* or to those who bear his image, his representatives, the possessors of his gifts and offices; and the proskynesis, which is yielded *without* and *in opposition to* God. The God of the Bible *will* be honoured in those, who bear his image, and who fulfil his offices; he will be honoured in father and mother, in the men of grey hairs (Lev. xix. 32), in princes (Ex. xxii. 27), in judges (Deut. i. 17; Ex. xxi. 6, xxii. 7, 8), and hence also in his heavenly messengers. It is godless to refuse this honour, and its natural expression in the bending of the body, under the pretext that it be-

longs only to God. It is to be avoided only where there is some danger, that the instrument of divine glory shall have an independent honour ascribed to it. But in the present connection nothing of this nature is to be imagined. The honour, that is here ascribed to John, consists in his receiving from Jesus the testimony, that he had the Spirit of prophecy: where the Spirit is, there God is. But the angel is only John's fellow-servant.—The angel describes himself as the fellow-servant of John and of his brethren, who have the testimony of Jesus. The testimony of Jesus is the testimony which Jesus delivers. According to the point of view taken in the Apocalypse the testifier is always properly Christ—comp. at ch. i. 2, vi. 9. In a looser sense every true Christian has the testimony of Jesus; to be a Christian and to be a witness are coincident; comp. ch. vi. 9, xii. 17. But the witness-bearing exists in its highest degree in apostles and prophets: they are in the fullest and highest sense those, who have the testimony of Jesus. According to Acts i. 8 the witnessing office was by the Lord himself committed pre-eminently to the Apostles. In ch. xvii. 6 of this book the witnesses of Jesus correspond to the prophets in ch. xviii, 24. In ch. xi. 3 the witnesses appear in public as prophecying. In ch. i. 2, it is said of John, that he has "testified of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." Now, that the witnesses of Jesus are spoken of here in the *latter* sense, there can be no doubt. In ch. xxii. 8, after John had received from the angel the full exhibition of what was here presented to him in its general outline, he again falls down to worship him. It is said there in ver. 9, "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren, *the prophets*." The prophets there correspond to those, who are here said to have the testimony of Jesus. Farther, even the word here, "I am thy fellow-servant," shows, the subject of discourse cannot be Christians, but only God's servants in his kingdom. The angels are servants of God as to their office. Therefore the persons, whose fellow-servants they are, must be contemplated with respect to their office, their mission (the names of angels and of apostles are alike in meaning.) Comp. in regard to the apostles as servants of God, on ch. i. 1. Then, that John here is regarded, not as a Christian, but as a prophet and an apostle, and that his brethren, who have the testimony of Jesus, are not Christians, but prophets, appears from ch. xxii. 6,

"And the Lord, the God of the Spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel, to shew to his servants, the *prophets*, what must come to pass." Finally, all doubt is removed by the explanation given in this passage itself. According to it, "those who have the testimony of Jesus," is as much as, those who have the Spirit of prophecy. With perfect justice, therefore, does Bossuet remark, "that the angel rejects the worship in order to place the apostolical and prophetical ministry on a footing with that of angels."—The word here "worship God," has nothing in common with that quoted by our Lord, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." This is directed only against those, who would worship a power, that sets itself up in rivalry with God and is opposed to him. Here, on the other hand, it is merely God's grace and office that are worshipped in the angel. The dissuasion is not based on the consideration, that the worship trenches on God's glory, but on the consideration, that it trenches on John's honour. It is as if it were said, go directly to God with thy worship, so that thou mayest not throw into the shade the glorious dignity bestowed on thee, and represented by thee. If the worship had at all interfered with the glory of God, John would certainly never, in the face of the angel's dissuasive, have repeated it a second time; supposing him to have been, on the first occasion (which, however, is not conceivable) carried into it by a sudden surprisal.[1]—The *for* introduces the reason, on account of which the angel had spoken of a *testimony* of Jesus. It stands in this, that the testimony of Jesus, which alone could here be made account of, is all one with the Spirit of prophecy. That the testimony *concerning* Christ is at the same time the testimony *of* Christ, and *prophecy* has its source in the *Spirit* of prophecy—these correspond to each other. Christ testifies in the prophets through his Spirit (1 Pet. i. 11.) That these last words have been so much misunderstood, is a mere consequence of the meaning of the testimony of Jesus, in the immediately preceding clause, having been incorrectly explained. The sense would have been the same, if it had been said in the discourse of the angel himself: those who have the testimony of Jesus, *that is* the Spirit of prophecy.

1 The right view was given by Grotius: non dicit προσκύνησιν soli deo licite exhiberi, repugnat enim tota vetus historia, sed benigne agit, ut si quis collegae dicat, serva hunc honorem regi.

THE VICTORY OF CHRIST OVER THE TEN KINGS.

(Ch. xix. 11—21.)

Christ appears at the head of his heavenly hosts, in the full glory of his nature, which is described at length by the holy Seer; so that it was from the first clear what those had to expect, against whom he went forth to battle, ver. 11—16. This is still more expressly announced by the angel, who stands in the sun, and calls the birds to a feast on the corpses, ver. 17, 18. The description of the battle is as remarkable for its brevity, as that of Christ is for its length; quite naturally, as there can properly be no sustained conflict against him, who slays with the breath of his mouth. According to ver. 19 the beast and the kings of the earth are assembled together with their hosts to fight against Christ. But presently in ver. 20, 21, the beast and his assistant, the false prophet, are seized and cast into the lake of fire, and a great slaughter takes place on the *human* enemies of Christ.

The kings of the earth under the command of the beast are described as the opponents of Christ in ver. 19. By ver. 15, these kings are to be regarded as *heathenish;* which accords with their subordination to the beast, as the beast certainly denotes the ungodly power of the world in its *heathen* state. The more particular account of these kings is to be found in what had been written previously of them.

This group, which represents the victory of Christ over the three enemies, first addresses itself to the victory over the beast. This beast has *seven heads,* denoting the seven phases of the worldly power in its ungodly heathen state. Of these seven heads *five* had already fallen before the time of the Seer (ch. xvii. 10): the Egyptian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Medo-Persian, Grecian. The fall of the *sixth* head, the Roman, under whose tyranny the church groaned in the time of John, has been delineated at length in the preceding portion; it had to give way to the present. According to ch. xvii. 12, ss., this present must be introduced through the *seventh* head with ten horns, which denote ten kings, the seventh phase of the worldly power in its heathen state, which was not, like the earlier ones, to have a *united* character,

but to be a *divided* sovereignty. These ten kings are the only powers in amity with the beast, and in hostility to Christ, which still remain on the field; the only ones, therefore, which can be understood here under the kings of the earth. Their war with Christ and their overthrow has already been described in ch. xvii. 14. It has also been expressly said in ch. xvii. 11, that with their overthrow the beast goes into perdition (comp. ver. 20 of this ch.), which may also, indeed, be understood of itself, since the beast has only seven heads, and its continued existence, after the seventh and last has fallen, is not conceivable. The ungodly power of the world exists only in its particular phases.

But now the question may be asked, of what sort is the battle of Christ, that is here described, against the destroyers of the Roman empire, or, as history has determined, the Germanic tribes. We cannot think of the quiet effective power of the word, to which allusion is made in ch. xvii. 14. There is here, we are rather to conceive, a second power brought into view, which always goes hand in hand with that of the word. It holds with nations, as with individuals, that they only who suffer in the flesh cease from sin; that they only who are chastised, exercise themselves to repentance; that the way into the kingdom of God is only through much tribulation; that the wine-press alone brings out the wine; that the seed of the divine word takes root merely in such fields as have been opened up by the plough of God's judgments. Every thing here bears the impress of anger; all points to blood and death; and however certainly this occupies but the foreground, however certainly there lies concealed behind the clouds of wrath, the sun of divine grace (which ch. xvii. 14 alone sufficiently proves), we are not by any means on that account to put it aside. The eyes of Christ are as a flame of fire; the sword, which goes out of his mouth; his iron rod, his garments stained with blood, the wine-press of his wrath, which he treads—all plainly indicate, that the mission of Christ here is one more immediately of wrath and judgment. John, however, has himself furnished us with a key. The commencement of the description of Christ's appearance here, in ch. xix. 11, presents an intentional verbal reference to ch. vi. 2. This reference, therefore, must indicate that the battle of Christ described here bears the same character as the former one. But

there the weapons of Christ's warfare are hunger, pestilence, and especially bloody discord. If we take into account the history of the times, when the northern tribes roved about, a long series of scenes will present themselves to our view, in which the contents of this vision passed into reality. A heavy oppression, for example, on the part of the Hunns, was the occasion of the western Goths being converted to Christianity (Kortüm, p. 40.) Attila, too, was for the Germanic tribes "the scourge of God." The battle-field alone in the plain of Chalons was covered with 162,000 bodies. And how many other battles and distresses are not recorded in the history of that time, by which every thing was done to break the hardness of the German nations, and soften their spirit! How much, for example, had the eastern Goths to suffer in Italy from the Franks! It is said, "Frightful was the distress of many regions; in the country of the Picentians, 50,000 men were starved with hunger; many, who bent forwards to spoil dead bodies, themselves fell down dead, nay even killed one another to obtain food." The German duke Leuthar, who broke in upon Italy about the middle of the sixth century with a great marauding host, "died of pestilence with the greater part of his men in the Venetian territory; many of them even went mad, and, like the duke himself, gnawed their own flesh."

Ver. 11. *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat thereon was called faithful and true, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.* Heaven is opened, so that the heavenly captain may descend from thence upon the earth with his hosts. In ch. iv. 1, heaven was opened, that John might ascend to heaven, in order to learn there the secret things of God. What would the earth have been, and what would it become, if heaven had not been still further opened for both purposes! if it had no more been possible to have such goings up and comings down! The difference between it and hell would then have been abolished.—What comes from heaven against the earth, obtains an easy victory. Christ's kingdom is not of this world. He, therefore, is irresistible when he goes forth in defence of his kingdom. "The men of the earth" give way before him, who comes down from heaven, and are found lighter than a feather.—That he who sits upon the

white horse is no other than Christ, is put beyond a doubt by the parallel passage, ch. vi. 2, "And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given him, and he marched forth conquering, and that he might conquer." The white horse points here, as it did also there, at once to the glory of the person and to its manifestations. The white horse forms the contrast to the ass in Matt. xxi. His first coming into the world was in the form of meekness, the second will be terrible, the cause of great pain to the ungodly. The white horse constantly appears anew, where the *lowly* form of the Saviour has been misapprehended and despised, where he has not been opened to when knocking at the door.—He, who sits upon the horse, is called faithful and true. The names of Christ in this vision are in all *four*. He is called faithful and true; he has a name written, which he alone knows; his name is called, the Word of God; he has a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Before this sacred number four, the earth, whose signature is four, must tremble. That Christ is designated the *true*, raises him far above the level of humanity, it bespeaks almightiness and essential Godhead (comp. at ch. iii. 7, vi. 10, xv. 3, xvi. 7.) This holds also of the name *faithful*. Absolute faithfulness or credibility pre-supposes omnipotence. All men *lie* (Ps. cxvi. 11); they all disappoint the confidence that is reposed in them, and leave in the lurch those who exercise it, (Ps. lxii. 9, cviii. 12.) "It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in men," (Ps. cxviii. 8.) The Lord appears here, as in all Scripture, as alone faithful and worthy of confidence. Christ's faithfulness and truth take from his enemies all hope of victory, and from his people all fear of defeat. The words, "and in righteousness," etc., are not a component part of the name, but they continue further the description of the nature and action, that is involved in the name. He judges and wars in *righteousness*, whose property it is to give to every one his own; why, then, should his church despond! how should his enemies fear and tremble! Parallel is Ps. xlv. 4, where the divine hero goes forth, "on account of truth and meekness—righteousness," that is, in behalf of those, who possess these excellencies, for the protection and deliverance of the true, the meek, the righteous. The *judging* has precedence of the warring, to distinguish Christ's

warring from that of men, which so often proceeds from irritated passion, and in this always has its foundation. Bengel: "In the world one is often a judge and no warrior, or a warrior and no judge. But Christ is a judge and a warrior."

Ver. 12. *But his eyes are as a flame of fire, and on his head many diadems, and he has a name written, which no one knows but himself.* In the description given of Christ in ch. i., the clothing was first mentioned in ver. 13, then the uncovered parts in ver. 14, 15; here the reverse order is followed. The eyes as a flame of fire denote the *energetic character of the punitive righteousness of Christ:* the eye, flashing indignation, (comp. on ch. i. 14.) Bengel; "A mortal man has often in the presence of others a fiery, sparkling, piercing power in his eyes, as it is known of kings, that they have sometimes with their eyes frightened people to death. What, then, must it be, when the Lord Jesus Christ directs upon his enemies the glance of his eyes! Shaking and trembling shall seize them before they feel the sword. The anger, which flashes from his eyes, at once smites the enemies to the ground, and the boldest spirits then become the most faint-hearted." The *diadems* on the head of Christ correspond to the *crown* in ch. vi. 2, xiv. 14. Their manifoldness corresponds to the name: King of kings, and Lord of lords, in ver. 16, and carries respect to the diadems on the ten horns of the beast, in ch. xiii. 1. The one with his many diadems is superior to the ten, who have each but their one. When any one is discouraged by the diadems of the ten kings, let him look to the one bright head with the many diadems—to him, who has all power committed to him in heaven and on earth. That Christ has many diadems, has been clearly proved by his having conquered the whole of the *earlier* phases of the heathen worldly power, from Pharaoh downwards. Several expositors have thought, that the many diadems here hold a still *closer* relationship to that previous conquering; that they are those of the already vanquished kings; appealing to 2 Sam. xii. 30, where David invests himself with the crown of the conquered king of the Ammonites, and to 1 Macc. xi. 13, where Ptolemy is represented as putting on two crowns, that of the kingdom of Egypt, and that of the kingdom of Asia. The many diadems would in that case go hand in hand with the garments dipt in

blood. He who has so many diadems already, will soon, and without difficulty, add to them those, which still shine so proudly on the heads of his enemies. If the diadems, however, were to be regarded as so precisely those of the conquered kings, it would probably have been more distinctly intimated.—Just as the many diadems form the consolatory contrast to the ten diadems in ch. xiii. 1, which are the distinguishing characteristic of him, against whom this contest is waged, so the *names of blasphemy* (*i. e.*, the names, by which an independent dominion is usurped over the earth, and which being written upon the heads of the beast, consequently were on the seventh head also, with which the conflict is now maintained), must become blanched before the name of Christ, which no one knows but himself. John *sees* the name, it appears *written*, but he can neither read, nor express it. So much only he discerns, that it is a name of transcendent glory, and this for the very reason, that he is too much blinded by its splendour, either to read or express it. "No one knows the Son, but only the Father" (Matth. xi. 27); the church, however, may know his surpassing glory, though she cannot *measure* it. This name, which no one knows but he himself, corresponds to the supreme dignity, which, in the Gospel of John, is ascribed to Christ, which assumes the essential unity of the Son with the Father, (ch. x. 30, 38.) Several expositors have entirely erred here in thinking of a particular name, the greater number of the *Word of God*. While, in point of fact, the fathomless depth of the matter is intended, this still obtains for itself a kind of body in the vision, since the name is made to appear as an unknown one. We are led also to the same result by the fundamental passage of the Old Testament. In Judg. xiii. Manoah asks the angel of the Lord, the Logos, who appeared to him, after his name. He answers in ver. 18, "Why askest thou after my name, and it is wonderful?"—transcending the power of human comprehension. The new name also of believers in ch. ii. 27 is no definite one. Bengel: "This alone is sufficient to impart joy to those who in truth rejoice in him, that they know they have a Captain who has a name known only to himself." Besides, the name which no one knows is only *one* among the many names of Christ. Unfathomable depth is but one side of Christ's nature. The other side is accessible to his church. A

great part of his riches is clearly apprehended by her. But he could not be her Saviour if this apprehension embraced all sides—if the *mystery* vanished, before which she ought to wonder and adore. It is not expressly said where the name was written. But from the preceding context we naturally think of the *head*, and the contrast between it and the names of blasphemy on the heads of the beast leads to the same conclusion. To the head also belongs the proper *head*-name, the name which expresses fully the nature. More particularly still we are to think of the *forehead*, where of old the high-priest bore the name of the Lord, to whom he belonged; where the just made perfect have the name of Christ and his Father written, according to ch. xiv. 1, and the worshippers of the beast, according to ch. xiii. 7, have his name; where Babylon, too, according to ch. xvii. 15, bears her name; and finally, where the distinguishing characteristics come prominently to view.[1]

Ver. 13. *And he is clothed with a garment dipt in blood, and his name was called*[2] THE WORD OF GOD. The garment dipt in blood points to Isai. lxiii. 1—3, comp. here ch. xiv. 20. The blood, according to this passage, which is also alluded to in ver. 15, is that of the enemies of God's people. The divine hero has already vanquished six phases of the ungodly power of the world, and has thereby given a sure pledge of the destruction of the seventh, against which he now goes forth. Bengel: "All his enemies must fall before him, and contribute to the renown of his might. Thus they still yield some profit." The name, "the Word of God,"[3] must be used here with reference to the clothing. Otherwise ver. 14 is incomprehensible. The transition from Christ to his army is there made through the medium

1 The reading, ἔχων ὀνόματα γεγραμμένα καὶ ὄνομα γεγραμμένον, which Tischendorf has received into the text, is without doubt the product of two readings. Its origin admits of less doubt, as there exists also the reading ὀνόματα γεγραμμένα ἄ. Offence was taken at the original ὀνόμα γεγραμμένον on account of the numerous diadems, under the impression that these must have names written on them. Bengel already remarks, Pluralem propere arreptum librarius, ut videtur, noluit delere, neque singularem expungere: itaque conjuxit.

2 The reading that is by much the best supported is καὶ κέκληται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ; but Luther followed the reading καλεῖται. The perfect indicates that the name was even now an *old* one.

3 There can be no doubt that we should render the name so. For λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, wherever it occurs besides in the New Testament, means "the Word of God," and especially does so in the Apocalypse; comp. ch. i. 2, 9, vi. 9, xx. 4.

of the clothing; and the statement respecting his name here cannot interrupt this connection; *it can only contain what must serve for an explanation of the clothing.* Now a bridge between the clothing and the name is supplied by Heb. iv. 12, "For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, and pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and joints and marrow;" comp. in regard to the passage on ch. i. 16. By this the name appears as the interpretation of the apparel. To both the destroying character is common; both announce Christ as the mighty warrior, whom nothing of a created nature is able to oppose. What the Word of God is able to accomplish is shewn by the first chapter of sacred Scripture. By it heaven and earth were called into being (Ps. xxxiii. 6.) If Christ is the personal Word of God—if everything, which else is called God's word, is but a single fragment of his nature—how should it ever be imagined that anything created could possibly stand before him? At the terrible sound of this name the ten kings must disperse like light froth. Bengel: "It is not said here, His name is called Jesus; for he manifests himself here, not as the Saviour of his people, but as the destroyer of his enemies. He will, therefore, be called here by that name, which is older than the name Jesus. The name Jesus especially unfolds his grace, and the name, the Word of God, his majesty. How deep must that, which is indicated by this name, lie in the unsearchable Godhead? A man's word is not only that which he expresses with his lips, and causes to be heard by the ear, but that also which he has within himself in his mind, and produces in his thoughts. If this internal word did not exist, it could not be brought forth into any form of speech or utterance. If even man's word is thus inward, how profound must be the seat of God's word, beyond any comprehension of ours, and what emotions should it stir, as often as it is declared, in respect to the creation or to the other works and witnesses of God, God speaks, the Lord testifies, etc. Against him, whose name is the Word of God, all his enemies, and in particular the beast, are but as stubble to the fire. With the spirit or breath of his lips he will slay the wicked, Isai. xi. 4. And no sinner or liar can anywhere stand before him." We are not, with De Wette, to understand by the Word of God him "who has revealed the Word of God, and

indeed first as doctrine, then as prophecy." For in that case this name would be appropriated to Christ as the most perfect teacher. But it is against the character of this whole section, in which only a polemical name suits one that threatens destruction; also against the connection with what immediately precedes, and against John i. (Vitringa: Id vero alienum est ab oratione Johannis, qui τὸν λόγον jam ante condita saecula ait fuisse in sinu patris et apud patrem.) By the name of the Word of God Christ appears in the writings of John only here, in ch. i. of his Gospel, and in the beginning of his first epistle. The composition of the Apocalypse by St John derives no small support from this, and all attempts have been in vain to set it aside. Some have sought to distinguish between the use of the expression here and in the other writings of John, by alleging that here the Logos or Word *of God* is spoken of, as if there also *the* Word could be any thing but the Word of God, and as if here that were not indispensable, which is there supplied by the connection. "The name (writes Köslin, p. 184) is primarily ascribed to him only in his exalted state, and now indeed first there, and inasmuch as he comes down to the earth in the capacity of an avenging judge." As if Christ could *become* the Word of God in the course of time; as if the name itself did not point to a necessity in the divine nature existing even from eternity; as if Christ, because he is the Word of God, and, inasmuch as he is so, must not have been in the beginning with God! Christ is not the Word of God as the one, "who renders the divine will efficient outwardly or upon the earth," but *because* he is the Word of God he does this also among other things, he throws down the kings of the earth with that same omnipotence by which he originally called the earth into existence. John, Lücke conceives, does not call the "historical Christ" simpliciter *the* Word, as if the name here did not, precisely as the name Michael, in ch. xii., designate Christ in respect to his *divine nature*, in which alone there was to be found the security for his last victory over an ungodly world. The allegation, besides, that the expression is here "copied, not that originally of John," has been already disproved, by the consideration that the name of the Word of God here, though used essentially in the same signification as in the Gospel and the first epistle of John, is still employed in a quite peculiar and original

respect. It would never have occurred to an *imitator* to serve himself of *such* an epithet as a hammer, wherewith to break in pieces the rock of the enemies of God's kingdom. That this was by no means an obvious thought is evident from the difficulty it has occasioned to expositors.—If Christ is the living Word of God, then all particular words of God must be spoken through his mediation, nor can there be any word of God which is not also a testimony of Jesus Christ, nor again a testimony of Christ, which is not a word of God (ch. i. 9, xx. 4; John xiv. 24.)

Ver. 14. *And the armies, which are in heaven, followed him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.* The clothing of Christ led St John to take a comparative survey of the clothing also of his attendants; and hence it is that, in the midst of his description of Christ, which is still continued in ver. 15, the army of Christ is at once brought into notice. But by occasion of the regard paid to the clothing, another thing also presents itself to the Seer, which he first makes mention of, because it runs parallel to a feature in the description of Christ, which had already been communicated. As Christ heads the expedition on a *white horse*, so his attendants also sit on white horses. It is natural to compare here ch. xvii. 14, where the *called*, the *chosen*, and the *believing* appear as associates of Christ's victory. Since, according to the point of view, under which matters are contemplated in the Apocalypse and in Scripture generally, the church, even in its militant state, has its existence in heaven (comp. on ch. xiii. 6), it were not impossible in itself that, by the armies in heaven, the multitudes of believers should be denoted. But when we consider that the attendance of believers would not be suitable to the manifestation of Christ here represented, which, analogously to that in ch. vi. 2, is a *judicial* and *destructive* one, though issuing at last in salvation; when we consider that we *commonly* behold the angels in the train of Christ when going forth to judge and punish (Matt. xvi. 27, xxv. 31, xxvi. 53; Luke ix. 26; Mark viii. 38; 2 Thess. i. 7); when, still farther, we consider that the name of the armies of heaven has been in a manner set apart in the Old Testament, and consecrated to the angels (Luke ii. 13), and also compare in this book, ch. xiv. 20; we shall not be able to doubt that the train of Christ is composed *of angels* and not of *believers;* and that our

passage does not cover itself with that of ch. xvii. 14, but is to be supplemented by it. *Here* it is the crushing power with which Christ, as the governor of the world, attended by his angels, beats to the ground all the resistance of his adversaries, through the means which have already been represented in ch. vi.; *there* it is the *peaceful* mission of the church which scatters the seed of the word in the fields that have been ploughed by the judgments of God.—In the clothing of the angels here, as in ch. xv. 6, where the seven angels that go out of the temple appear clothed with pure white linen, their *mission* is symbolized, the work they have to accomplish. The glittering white denotes his glory, the purity his righteousness.

Ver. 15. *And out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the heathen; and he will tend them with a staff of iron, and he treads the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of God the Almighty.* It is here, as it was at ch. i. 15; after the description given of the leading parties, there follows what presents itself as worthy of remark in the kind of manifestation. First, what proceeds out of the mouth.—The eye discerns here nothing but the *sharp sword*, which goes out of the mouth; what is said *besides* in this verse, the tending of the heathen with the staff of iron and the treading of the wine-press, is a mere *accompaniment;* it serves only to explain that symbol of the all-powerful agency of Christ in judging and destroying. Hence also it is manifest that these two active operations must as to the reality belong only to the future—for the battle does not commence till ver. 20—and the first is even expressly represented as belonging to the future: he *will* tend. Bengel remarks, "The smiting sword is there to smite or kill the nations; the *staff of iron* for the compulsory subjection of those who survive." But according to the fundamental passage, Ps. ii., the iron staff serves for dashing in pieces.—The *sharp sword* is that of the *Almighty*, who speaks and it is done, and who kills by the breath of his lips (comp. on ch. i. 16, ii. 12.) How Christ slays his enemies with the sword of his mouth, we may learn from a prophetic example in John xviii. 5, "Now, when Jesus spake to them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground" (comp. Acts ix. 4, 5.)—The *heathen* are to be thought of as angry against Christ and his church (comp. ch. xi. 18, xvi. 19, and ch. xvii. 14, "These

shall war with the Lamb.") This is implied in the name itself of the heathen (comp. on ch. vii. 9.)—The tending of the heathen with the iron staff has already occurred in ch. ii. 27, xii. 5—see at the latter passage, where it was also shown, how behind the destruction salvation is concealed, behind the judgment grace.—The *wine-press* is that of God's wrath (comp. on ch. xiv. 19.). As in the wine-press the grapes are crushed to nothing, so are the heathen by the wrath of God. That Christ treads the wine-press denotes him to be the one who puts in motion the judgments of God against his enemies, brings them into play. The press of the wine is the press which causes wine to be pressed out. The wine, according to ch. xiv. 20, is the blood of the enemies. According to ch. xiv. 19, where the great wine-press of the wrath of God is spoken of, we must here explain: the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of God (comp. on the fierceness of God's wrath at ch. xvi. 19); and the words, "of the fierceness of the wrath of God," must not be made to depend simply on "the wine." In ch. xiv. 19 the symbol itself is made to express the energy of the divine wrath (the *great* wine-press); here the explanatory word conveys it: the *fierceness* of the wrath of God.

Ver. 16. *And has upon his garment and upon his thigh a name written: A King of kings, and a Lord of lords.* Upon the garment and the thigh, stands for, upon the garment in the region of the thigh. The thigh is brought into view here as the place where commonly, though not in this case, the *sword* is to be found. The sword was spoken of in the words immediately before. Precisely because it was *not* found here, the *name* is mentioned and takes its place. If the sword had been there, it would have conveyed the same import. The sword of the warrior and the ruler is everywhere the symbol of his personality and of his whole position. In Ps. xlv. 3, 4, "Gird thy sword on thy thigh, O hero, thy glory and thy majesty. And in this thy glory ride prosperously," &c., not merely is the sword placed in connection with the thigh, but also along with the sword and in it the glory and the majesty. "The sword is, indeed, a proper sword, but the Psalmist, viewing it with the eyes of the Spirit, sees in it a symbol of his glory and majesty, so that he is girded with the sword as if it were *these*, since they use it, and manifest themselves by it. The sword, spiritually considered, is always as

the man is who carries it; and the matter at once presents to the spiritual mind a quite different aspect." On the expression: a King of kings, and a Lord of lords, comp. ch. xvii. 14, where Christ is also denominated thus with respect immediately to the ten kings, 1 Tim. vi. 15. In ch. xvii. 14 the fundamental passages were given in the inverse order; here they are put right.

Ver. 17. *And I saw an angel stand in the sun, and he cried with a great voice and said, to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven;* ver. 18, *Come, assemble to the great supper of God, that ye may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of the strong, and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all that are free and of slaves, and of small and of great.* Where such a king goes forth to battle the issue cannot be doubtful. This idea is embodied in the image of the angel who stands in the sun, and even before the slaughter takes place calls upon all the birds under the heavens to a feast on the carcases. Bengel: "When a human being would inflict a slaughter on the world, in spite of the best prospects and efforts the victory may still fall into the opposite hands. But that Christ should fail in the matter is quite impossible, and therefore the birds are invited before the conflict has even begun." The fundamental passage is Ezek. xxxix. 17—20. What is said there in the prophecy against Gog, is here applied to the ten kings, as a proof that what is declared here primarily in regard to the ten kings finds its analogous application to Gog and Magog. *The sun*, corresponding to the space in the midst of heaven—for the birds, that fly in the midst of heaven, move about in the region where the angel stands—is the most fitting place for a herald standing in, whose voice is intended to be heard by the whole earth (comp. on ch. viii. 13, xiv. 6.) We should perhaps supply in addition, that the sun, as the natural image of the glory of God and Christ (comp. on ch. i. 16, x. 1, xii. 1), is the fittest standing-place for a heavenly messenger who is to announce the victory of God and Christ.—*The great supper of God* forms here the sad contrast to the marriage supper of the Lamb in ver. 9. Those who despise the invitation to the supper of the Lamb shall not be able to keep away from *this* supper. The enumeration: the flesh of kings, &c., is similar to those in ch. vi. 15, xiii. 16. We have here four parties, the last again composed of four mem-

bers, corresponding to the four members of the second and third division.

Ver. 19. *And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to fight with him who sat upon the horse, and with his army.* The kings stand under the direction of the *beast*—comp. on ch. xvii. 13, "These have one mind, and give their power and authority to the beast." The kings of the *earth* are so named in ver. 11, in contrast to the King of kings, who is of heaven, as worthy associates of the *beast* (see on ch. xiii. 12, 12), on account of their earthly disposition.—The kings are bound together only by the common feature of their earthly temperament; apart from this there is no tie amongst them; and hence mention is made of *armies*. On the other hand, Christ has with him only *one* army.

Ver 20. *And the beast was seized, and the false prophet with him, who did signs before him, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image: alive these two were cast into the lake of fire, that burns with brimstone.* The beast was seized, which had so often endeavoured to seize Christ in his members, St John, for example—comp. John vii. 30, 32, 44, x. 39. (The verb πιάζω often occurs in John's Gospel, and in connections, in which elsewhere other expressions are used.) Züllig: "How and by whom it is not said, but without doubt the army of Christ must here be conceived to take part, since otherwise we could not understand for what purpose it had been assembled, what is done afterwards being accomplished by the leader himself." It is at all events significant, that the action is not expressly attributed to Christ himself here, as it is in respect to Satan in ch. xx. 2.—In reference to the false prophet, comp. ch. xiii. 11, sq. Bengel: "Who did signs, etc., expresses the reason why the false prophet receives a like punishment with the beast, and at the same time."[2] The *alive*, without corporeal death (comp. ver. 21), confirms the view, that the beast

1 As the τε elsewhere is not found in the Apoc. it has probably been shoved in here by copyists who are fond of grammatical niceties, both after ἐλευθέρων and after μικρῶν.

2 The ὁ μετ' αὐτοῦ ψευδοπροφήτης, is recommended in preference to the reading followed by Luther, μετ' αὐτοῦ ὁ ψευδ., by ch. xiii. 12, 14, 15, where the second beast, the false prophet, is represented as only the servant and tool of the first.

and the false-prophet are not human individuals, but purely ideal forms. A human individual cannot proceed *alive* into hell. Ps. lv. 15 does not admit of being compared. For there, what is meant by alive, is in the fulness of life and strength; and in this sense also alone was it, that the rebellious company in the time of Moses went down alive into hell. That vicious realism, which is unable to distinguish between form and essence, vision and reality, must be put to the blush at ch. xx. 14, where death and hell, in like manner purely ideal forms, are cast into the lake of fire.—*Fire* and *brimstone* as a description of hell-torments have occurred already at ch. xiv. 10, 11. A *lake* (sea) of fire and brimstone is mentioned here for the first time; but occurs again in ch. xx. 10, 14, 15, xxi. 8. As the fire and brimstone point to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrha (comp. on ch. xiv. 10), so it is very natural to suppose, that allusion is made to the *dead sea* as the earthly image of hell.[1]

Ver. 21. *And the rest were killed by the sword of him who sat upon the horse, that goes out of his mouth; and all birds were filled of their flesh.* The *rest*, as they have been enumerated in ver. 18. Bengel: "They were killed with the destroying sword of Christ, which is not of steel or iron, but goes out of his mouth, and so is a spiritual weapon of resistless might." Comp. 2 Thess. ii. 8. Only as a preliminary punishment does bodily death fall upon them. They shall be sent into hell at the final judgment (comp. ch. xx. 12—15), if they have not meanwhile in the intermediate state attained to salvation (1 Pet. iii. 20), as those, who have only sinned against the Son of Man, and not against the Holy Spirit.

THE THOUSAND YEARS' REIGN.

(Ch. xx. 1—6.)

Of the three enemies of God's kingdom, Satan alone now remains. The ground, however, has been taken from under

1 The expression γεέννα occurs as little in the Apoc. as in the Gospel of John; all the three first evangelists have it.

him by the overthrow of the beast and the false prophet. He is bound for a thousand years by the power of Christ, so that he can no farther deceive the nations, ver. 1—3. Thus, therefore, the church of Christ celebrates on earth a glorious triumph; and even the faithful witnesses and confessors, who do not live to see the beginning of the thousand years, so that they cannot reign with Christ *upon the earth*, do not altogether vanish during the thousand years; they exist in heavenly bliss, and reign in heaven with Christ over the earth, ver. 4—6. With such prospects for the church of Christ in earth and heaven, who would then be afraid any more of the great dragon and his associates? They can neither arrest the victorious career of Christ on earth, nor intercept the enjoyment of the heavenly bliss.

Ver. 1. *And I saw an angel come down from heaven, who had the key of the abyss, and a great chain on his hand.* Ver. 2. *And he seized the dragon, the old serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.* Ver. 3. *And cast him into the abyss, and shut and sealed over him, that he might no more deceive the heathen till that the thousand years were completed; afterwards he must be loosed for a short time.*—What is here undertaken against Satan stands in the closest connection with what had been said immediately before respecting the ten kings and the beast; it takes this for granted, and follows necessarily from it. The dominion of the God-opposing principle was broken in the ten kings, partly through severe judgments of God (ch. xix. 11—21), partly through the peaceful mission of the church (ch. xvii. 14.) They have *renounced* their enmity against God and Christ and the church; and by reason of their having taken on them the yoke of Christ, the beast, too, has retired from the stage, whose *last instruments* they were. From the whole doctrine of Scripture touching the relation of Satan to human affairs, it was thus only that Satan could find room for his seductive agency, and in the same way it must again be taken from him after it was given. The existence of the beast and its heads, according to the preceding portion, forms the basis of Satan's dominion over the earth (comp. ch. xii. 3, xiii. 2.) The sphere of Satan upon earth extends precisely as far, as the sphere of the inclination to meet him on it. Believers have the privilege of praying, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil" (the evil enemy);

and this prayer, like all the petitions in the Paternoster, has for its foundation a *testimony* and a *promise*, that God does not lead his people into temptation, but rather delivers them from the tempter. The faithful God does not suffer him to come upon them with his temptations, for which even they should not be equal, with the great power and cunning, which he possesses. He allows them to be exposed to no more than human temptations. Satan is only the prince *of the world*. Such alone are deceived by him, as will suffer themselves to be deceived by it. For these it is a deserved punishment, if they are given up to Satan, and they are gradually led farther than they were disposed to go. "Every one," says St James, "is tempted, when he is led away and enticed by his own evil lust" (ch. i. 14.) "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (ch. iv. 7), etc. *If the earth were to watch and pray for a thousand years, Satan should have nothing on it.* What is said here of the operations of Christ, even now repeats itself anew in the case of every individual, who stands in faith, watches and prays. If we separate what Christ here does against Satan, from the preparation and basis laid for it in what precedes, the question then arises, why should Christ not have bound Satan earlier? and also, why should he not have thrown him at once into the lake of fire, but allowed him to get free again after a thousand years?—That the angel here, as at ch. vii. 2, x. 1, xiv. 17, xviii. 1, is *Christ*, is evident from this, that he has the key of the abyss, which is declared in ch. i. 18, to which allusion is here made, to belong to Christ. The key of the abyss was not in the first instance *given* to him, as to the star in ch. ix. 1, but he *has* it, has it *here*, because he has it *always*. Further, he who in ver. 1 comes down from heaven, lays hold of Satan in ver. 2, binds him and throws him into the abyss. It is Christ, according to ch. xii. 9, who overcomes "the great dragon, the old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world," and casts him down from heaven upon the earth. Allusion has already been distinctly made to this passage in the appellations given to Satan in ver. 3. He who here throws Satan into hell can be no other than he who there threw him on the earth; the more especially, as this latter victory is grounded on the earlier one. In Matth. xii. 29 it is represented as the peculiar work of Christ to bind Satan—comp. Hebr. ii. 14; 1 John

iii. 8; Col. ii. 15. But the vague designation is chosen on purpose, as the Seer would only describe what he saw, and would present to his readers a sacred riddle (comp. at ch. x. 1.) Besides, this designation has respect to the circumstance, that what Christ here does he accomplished in the power and omnipotence of the Father.—The abyss is hell—comp. at ch. ix. 1; xi. 7, xvii. 8. Hell is Satan's "own place," from whence he makes excursions upon the earth. He will be shut up to that place of his own.—The angel of God has the key *in* his hand, hence the chain is *on* his hand. A great chain—in the words of Bossuet—"that it might make many coils around him." The actual import of the chain is described by the same author as meaning "the inviolable orders of God, and the impress of his eternal will."—In ver. 2 the same names of the wicked enemy are found, and in the same order as at ch. xii. 9; which is certainly intentional, and imports, that what Christ here executes against Satan, had its root in that fundamental victory over him. The number *four* is used also here, because Satan is brought under consideration as *the prince of this world*. For the same reason, the name of the great dragon stands here first in order.[1]—Not the dragon, but *Satan* and the *devil* is loosed at the end of the thousand years, ver. 7, 9. In his property as the dragon, Satan is for ever removed, as certainly as the beast, the ungodly heathen state, has already, in ch. xix. 20, been for ever cast into the lake of fire. The new phase of enmity toward Christ and his church, as it breaks forth at the end of the thousand years, bears an essentially different character from the earlier ones.—The *thousand years* are mentioned not less than *six* times. This intentional emphatic repetition shows, that a real importance is attached to the number, although, since the beginning and end of the space indicated by it bear from the nature of things a floating character, we are not to imagine, that we can historically point out with precision the thousand years, and we must satisfy ourselves with being able to fix on a period that somewhat nearly corresponds to it. If a definite era were fixed on for the commencement, scarcely any other would be so suit-

1 The two readings ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, for τὸν ὄφιν τὸν ἀρχαῖον, and ὁ σατανᾶς for σατανᾶς without the article, bear very strongly the suspicion of being derived from ch. xii. 9; the more so, as not a few MSS. have also taken from that passage ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην.

able as the first Christmas-eve of the year 800, the day of the inauguration of the Western Christian empire, when the Pope placed the crown on the head of Charlemagne, and the joyful proclamation sounded forth, "To Charles Augustus, crowned by God, the great and peaceful Roman emperor, life and victory" (see Rüh's Gesch. des Mittelalters, p. 447.)—In ver. 3 the "over him" belongs not less to "he shut," than to "he sealed." The *shutting over*[1] is used the more appropriately here, as the prison-house is a *subterranean one*.—The symbol of *sealing* should not be broken up; but we should hold simply to the point, that it indicates the *security* of the custody; on the ground, that in circumstances which in other respects were not analogous to ours, people were wont to seal what they would have kept with care. Thus, according to Matth. xxvii. 66, the stone at the grave of Jesus was sealed, as Darius had also sealed on Daniel the stone at the mouth of the lions' den, "so that nothing should be done to Daniel against the king's will." Perhaps a special allusion is made to these two transactions, in which the devil had had his hand in the play. "To-day to me, to-morrow to thee," this holds in respect to every thing that Satan would accomplish against Christ and his people.—The Berleb. Bible on the words, "he cast him into the abyss," &c., remarks, "Reference is made to the abyss in Luke viii. 31. The evil spirits marked in the first coming of Christ what they had to expect. It was then, however, still before the time. They themselves understood there was a time, Matt. viii. 29. And what was then foreboded by the evil spirits, that is now brought about in its proper time."—Satan is shut up into the abyss, so that he may no more deceive the *heathen* till the end of the thousand years. The word ἔθνη in the language of the Apocalypse does not denote the nations generally, but always the heathen nations, either in their natural or their Christianized state (comp. in the latter respect ch. xxi. 24, xxii., with Rom. xi. 13.) Here, according to the natural import of the words, it is not the deceiving of *individuals* that is spoken of, but *the deceiving of the peoples as such*,[2] the destruction of the *Christian*

1 Comp. the סגר with על in Job xii. 14. The appending of αὐτόν (Luther: he shut *him*) has only arisen from the circumstance, that it was thought the ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ must refer merely to the ἐσφράγισεν.

2 Mark: ut gentes omnes et totas ex veteri more constrictas non teneat.

state that was settled among them at and through their subjugation by Christ (comp. ch. xvii. 14.) Further, the discourse here is not of the seducing to sin generally, but of seducing to *absolute heathenism*, to open unbelief and opposition toward Christ and his church. For it was an open and unconditional contrast of this kind that was delineated in what precedes, to which reference is here expressly made ("that he may *no more* deceive"); such a contrast had existed in the times of the beast (comp. xiii. 14), during the continuance of the sixth head, Rome, and the seventh head, the ten kings; and such an one is also to return at the end of the thousand years (comp. ver. 7.) The not-deceiving of the heathen during the thousand years forms the contrast to the deceiving of them *before* and *after*, and from this, therefore, it receives its more precise and definite meaning. The deceiving also in ch. xii. 9 is used of provocation to open battle against the kingdom of God, the devil being there represented as he who deceives the whole world. This consideration, too, is to be taken into account for determining aright the meaning, that Satan is first mentioned here as the *dragon;* that, therefore, he comes here into view above all as the animating principle of the ungodly power of the world (comp. at ch. xii. 9), and only such deceiving can be ascribed to him as is proper to him in that character. And, farther, that the two last names also indicate his violent hostility toward the church.—If the words, "that he may no more deceive the heathen," have been rightly explained, it is manifest that nothing is to be found here which might not have happened to the Christian church during her thousand years' dominion as actually existing in history; in respect to which the word holds, that was spoken by our Lord of Elias in Matt. xvii. 12, "He has come already, but they did not know him." If we drop the *more* in the clause "he may no more deceive the heathen," we get ourselves entangled in great difficulty. Death reigns still during the thousand years, according to ver. 13. But death is inseparably connected with all besides that renders our earth a valley of trouble and distress; in particular with sin, through which it came into the world, and whose wages it is. But sin is inseparably connected with the working of Satan; it was through that at first, and through that also in all later times, that his working proceeds.—What Bengel says of the thousand years' reign suits

as exactly as possible to the period of history, which we regard as comprised by it; as exactly, that is, as could be expected in the earth, while the fundamental relations introduced by sin still continue unchanged. "The war of the dragon, which he has carried on with the others against the seed of the woman (ch. xii. 17), ceases; the woman herself is no longer shut up in the wilderness; but she has the field of the world laid open before her; her manson rules all the nations, and these are no more deceived by Satan, but acknowledged by their divine Shepherd, are subject to him, and are freed from persecutions."—The heathenish state of mind forms the necessary condition to Satan's work of deceiving. This condition was for the time destroyed by the victory of Christ over the ten kings. *And the deceiving can only return by a return being first made to heathenism. Then Satan makes himself known as the organizing principle of opposition to the kingdom of God.*

Ver. 4. *And I saw thrones and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast, nor his image, and had not received his mark on their forehead and on their hand. And they lived and reigned with Christ the*[1] *thousand years.* Ver. 5. *The rest of the dead, however, did not again live till the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*—That ver. 4—6 contain an interlude is clear from this alone, that ver. 7 manifestly joins to ver. 3. In ch. vi. 11 there was *given* to the martyrs at a determinate period for John and the church, what they must have substantially possessed the moment they passed out of this present life. It is much the same also here. In what precedes the church, sighing under the persecution of her oppressors, was pointed onwards to the approaching period of her thousand years' ascendancy, which she was to enjoy after the

1 It is of little moment whether the article before χίλια is genuine or not, and in respect to the genuineness we can hardly decide on external grounds. The identity of this period of a thousand years with that of vers. 2, 3, which was unaccountably denied by Bengel, if it might otherwise be a matter of doubt, and were not determinately fixed by the whole context, at all events is established by ver. 7, where the thousand years cannot be conceived different from those in ver. 3, and as little from those in the immediately preceding verses, in ver. 4—6.

overthrow of her enemies. But still this consolation did not suffice for those, who were constantly involved in distress and threatened with death, for whom St John, according to ch. i. 9, more immediately wrote. The sorrowful question pressed itself on the Seer, But what shall become of us, during that period of a thousand years, who shall not see the blessed time? The answer to this question is received by John, and communicated in a vision, in which at the threshold of the thousand years those, who had departed earlier, whether by martyrdom, or by a common death, if only they died in the Lord, are represented as solemnly inaugurated in their possession of the heavenly inheritance. That this inauguration is placed here at the commencement of the millennial kingdom, arises simply and exclusively from the question that occurred to St John, in respect to the condition of the departed during these very thousand years. That substantially the heavenly glory had been communicated to these departed saints at an earlier period, at their departure, indeed, out of this life, is the uniform doctrine of the Apocalypse (comp. on ch. xiv. 13.)—. It is not expressly said, who they were, that sat upon the thrones. But the more particular description may be learnt from ch. iv. 4, "And round about the throne four and twenty thrones, and sitting upon the thrones four and twenty elders, clothed with white robes and golden crowns on their heads." There, the representatives of the church, the four and twenty elders, the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles, sit with God in judgment. It appears also from Matth. xix. 28, where the twelve apostles are spoken of as sitting on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. In the twelve tribes of Israel John recognizes the whole Christion church (comp. on ch. vii. 4.) Finally, it appears from the last fundamental passage, Dan. vii. 9, 10. There, around the throne of the Ancient of Days, are placed thrones; the judgment, composed of the representatives of the covenant people (comp. at ch. iv. 4) takes possession of them, and the books are opened. From these passages it admits of no doubt, that those, who sit upon the thrones, are the *twelve apostles*, probably in fellowship with the twelve patriarchs. It is in unison with John's covert style in his gospel, when speaking there of himself (comp. ch. xix. 26, 35, xx. 2, ss., xiii. 23, etc.), that he should here have failed to mention expressly those, to whose number he himself belonged. He

could yield to the inclination to let his own person remain in the background, the more readily here, as also in the fundamental passage of Daniel, those sitting on the thrones are not more exactly defined. It is merely said there, "The judgment."—The judgment being given to those, who sit on the thrones, denotes that they received *full judicial power.* The object of the judging is here, not the ungodly world, as in Dan. vii. 9, 10; Rev. iv. 4; 1 Cor. vi. 2, but as in Matth. xix. 28, the church. *The claims of the faithful witnesses of Jesus to the heavenly recompense must be investigated.* The judges and the persons to be judged are by the construction united in the closest manner with each other: "And I saw thrones," etc., "and (I saw) the souls," etc. The sentence is this, that the faithful witnesses must live and reign with Christ.—John sees the *souls* of the slain. The souls are here, as at ch. vi. 9, the *murdered* souls—not the souls in the intermediate state, disembodied spirits, which are never so designated. The place of the souls, the blood, or the corpses might also have been put. For, that they are here contemplated as they were in the moment of death, and that they present themselves before the judgment when the thread of their corporeal life was cut, is to shew that their living again follows directly in consequence of the judicial sentence. John sees the *souls*, because on this holy offering, which the beheaded had presented to God and Christ (comp. on ch. vi. 9, xvi. 7), rested their claim to the heavenly recompense.—Instead of: the beheaded, it is properly, the killed with the hatchet. The expression has respect to the peculiar form of the Roman executions (Polybius, I. 17, 12; *μαστιγώσαντες ἅπαντας κατὰ τὸ παρ' αὐτοῖς ἔθος ἐπελέκισαν*), and shews that here we are primarily to think of the martyrs, who sacrificed their lives in the Roman persecutions.—In regard to the words, "for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God," comp. on ch. v. 9, i. 9. Because Jesus is the personal Word of God, there can be no testimony of Jesus, which is not also the word of God, and no word of God, which is not the testimony of Jesus (see on ch. xix. 13.)—The description, "who had not worshipped the beast," &c., adds to the martyrs all those, who in the conflict that then raged so fiercely between Christ and the beast, had remained stedfast on the side of the former; as also in ch. xiv. 13, blessedness is ascribed to all those who die in the

Lord. We must only explain: those, who—not of those; for it is merely in respect to the slain, that the souls can be made the subject of discourse.—The expression, "and they lived," is as much as, and I saw how they lived, or they attained to life before my eyes. John sees them not merely in the state of the living; but he also sees how they came to this state (comp. Ezek. xxxvii. 7.) It is not merely the souls, that we are to take for the subject in the expression "they lived," but the beheaded and those who had not worshipped. Life is here not bare life, but *blessed* life —the life, which is analogous to that of the risen Christ, in which with the resurrection there is also coupled glorification (ch. ii. 8) —the life, to which the promise in ch. ii. 10 refers, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life," from which in ver. 12 of this chapter the book of life derives its name, and of which Jesus says in John's gospel, ch. xiv. 19, "I live and ye shall live also" (comp. ch. v. 25, 26, and in regard to the notion of life in John, at ch. vii. 17.) To the life here corresponds in ch. vi. 11, the white garment. Life in the passage before us cannot be understood of bare life, for this also ceases at death, which cannot be annihilation for man, who is made in the image of God. If the life denoted not an earlier nor an extinct stage of being, if it had referred to the simple restoration of life, the word would doubtless have been of living *anew;* and so indeed several manuscripts would have it (*ἀνέζησαν.*) De Wette explains thus: "they returned again to full life, received a body again." But with what propriety could the mere word, "they lived," be used of those who already enjoyed blessedness, into which, as the Revelation uniformly teaches, believers pass immediately after their departure out of this life!—In regard to the *reigning* or ruling with Christ, see at ch. i. 6, 9, ii. 21, 26—28, v. 10. Christ reigns from the beginning of the thousand years to their end. For, his enemies who contended with him for the dominion, the beast, the false prophet, and the dragon, have now become his footstool. *His members take part in this dominion.* They can look down with holy pride upon the earth, whereon the church, to which they devoted their services and their lives in times of danger and tribulation, has now become the reigning power; so that matters proceed upon earth only in accordance with their will, resting on the will of Christ. The *rest of the dead* in ver.

5 are the *godless* dead. For the word in ver. 4, "they lived," holds not merely in respect to the martyrs, but to all the true members of Christ. And in ver. 12, 13, the judgment is held only on the ungodly. Such being the case, we are not to conclude from the words, "they lived not till the thousand years were finished," that they *lived* at the end of the thousand years. The godless are here rather declared to be destitute of the glorious privilege which is enjoyed by believers during the thousand years' reign. How it is to fare with the ungodly at the end of the thousand years is written in ver. 12, 13. Believers lived during the thousand years; at the end they go into perfect bliss. The ungodly, on the other hand, did not live during the thousand years; but they were in hades and in torment; and at the end of the thousand years they pass out of their provisional state of misery into the final one, and shall be cast into the lake of fire.—*This is the first resurrection.* The Apocalypse invariably points to a double stage of blessedness—the one awaiting believers immediately after their departure out of this life; the other, what they are to receive when they enter the new Jerusalem—comp. ch. vi. 11, where the two are placed beside each other. The most precise expression for the former we have in ch. xiv. 13, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord *from henceforth;*" and for the second in ch. xix. 9, "Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." Ch. vii. 9—17 joins closely to ch. xiv. 13, as do also ch. xiv. 1—5, xv. 2—4; and ch. xix. 9 is expanded in ch. xxi. 22 (comp. iii. 12.) Very often the two stages are combined together on account of the oneness of life or blessedness belonging to them—for example, ch. ii. 7, 10, 17, iii. 5. In the doctrine of a double stage of blessedness the Saviour himself took the lead. He refers to the first in what he says to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" also in John xiv. 2, 3, xiii. 36, xvii. 24. The latter is referred to in Matt. xix. 28, John v. 25, 28, 29, vi. 39, 40. *There can be no doubt, that by the first resurrection we are here primarily to understand that first stage of blessedness.* In so understanding it, we abide in unison with the Apocalypse and the whole of the other books of the New Testament. On the other hand, if we understand by the first resurrection a resurrection in the literal sense—if, accordingly, we suppose that

the first resurrection has respect to *one* part of men, the second to another—we then arrive at a doctrine which in no other part of Scripture finds a ground of support, which, on the contrary, is everywhere explicitly opposed. Now, the only thing which can raise any doubt regarding the most natural and obvious view, is that the *resurrection* is here spoken of. This expression appears only to suit the heavenly state of blessedness. But when John denotes the two stages by the same name in order to make them known as the component parts of the same salvation, and only distinguishes them, the one as the first, the other as the second resurrection, there must of necessity in the one case attach to the term a certain want of literality. This want is all but expressly indicated by the phrase "*first* resurrection." Two resurrections, in the proper sense, are not conceivable—if we would not abandon the ground of Scripture, which nowhere knows of anything but a *general* resurrection. That the design simply of drawing a parallel between the two stages has given rise to the expression is plain from this consideration, that in what precedes, where this design has still not entered, it is not the *resurrection*, but the *life* that is mentioned. We cannot think of the life as existing first, and then the resurrection, but inversely. With the resurrection in the proper sense the chief point is not the local rising out of the grave, but the *transition to a new and glorious state*. This general element is what alone is taken into account here, in order that the two degrees of bliss might be denoted by the same word. And such a view is the less liable to objection, as the figurative use of the resurrection is also of frequent occurrence in Scripture; as by it changes from misery to bliss, from a depressed to an elevated condition are denoted, which are by no means so nearly connected with the literal resurrection.[1] The *resurrection of the dead* forms in Ezekiel, ch. xxxvii., the point of transition to the Lord's people from the state of deep humiliation to one of exaltation. In Hebr. xi. 35, the resuscitation of those who were brought to life again by Elijah and Elisha is described as a *resurrection*. What is meant cannot be a resurrection in the proper sense. Even in the *purely*

[1] Mark: Nec dubium est, quin cum hanc vitam altera totius hominis novissimo die sequatur, qua per corporis restitutionem homo totus ex perditione eripietur, prima merito dicatur haec resurrectio, praeludium et pignus certum secundae illius.

spiritual territory the ideas of revivication and resurrection are employed; comp. Eph. ii. 6, 14; Col. iii. 1.

Ver. 6. *Blessed is he and holy, who has part in the first resurrection: over such the second death has no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.* The *holy* denotes here not the moral quality, but the glory of the state (comp. at Ps. xvi. 2, and Rev. iv. 8, xi. 18, xiv. 10, where the holy angels are mentioned.) Believers are holy even *in this life*; they are found in the glorious state of the children of God; they are separated from a profane world, behind the show and glitter of which there lie concealed the deepest humiliation and the greatest misery. But the complete manifestation of holiness belongs to the future world. The glory is more distinctly unfolded in the words that follow, "they shall be priests," etc. "In a similar manner are glory and blessedness united together," says Bengel, "in 2 Tim. ii. 10; he is blessed, with whom it is quite well; holy indicates something still higher." —On the *second death*, see at ch. ii. 11. Parallel to the expression, "Over such the second death has no power," is John xi. 26, "He that believeth upon me shall never die." In regard to the expression, "they shall be priests," comp. at ch. i. 6, v. 10. Bengel: "Saints are also priests of Christ, therefore is Christ true God, see Acts xiv. 13." The whole verse possesses a hortatory character. It calls upon us to regard the troubles and sufferings of this present life as nothing, if we may but attain to the glorious good of the first resurrection.

It seems proper, to introduce here the article that appeared some time ago in the Evang. K. Zeitung on the thousand years' reign, which touches on many points, that have been passed over in the exposition. In doing so, we shall make both some omissions and some additions, yet so as not to destroy the colour it assumed from the period of its origin (March 1848), nor to be greatly solicitous about saying nothing the second time, which may have been substantially said already.

THE THOUSAND YEARS' REIGN.

"Blessed is he who reads and they who hear the words of this

prophecy, and keep what is written therein"—so speaks St John at the beginning of the Apocalypse. And at its close we read, "But I testify to all, who hear the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." If we consider the solemn earnestness there is in these words, we shall find it impossible to remain in a state of indifference toward this book. If we diligently apply ourselves to the consideration and understanding of its contents, even though this endeavour should at first be attended with little fruit, we should still not suffer the longing desire for a proper understanding of it to die in our souls; we should hold ourselves ready to receive benefit by all attempts that may be made to open to us its meaning. Nor shall our spirit also fail to have itself quickened and profitably exercised by what is said of the high importance of the book, if it does not suffer itself to be carried away by senseless objections, even though they should be uttered by pretended apostles and prophets.

The book, however, has a quite peculiar value for the present time. We learn its historical starting-point from ch. i. 9, "I John, your brother and companion in the tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle, that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." Accordingly, the book was written by one, who himself had to suffer persecution for the sake of Christ, and languished in banishment; and at a time when all, who confessed Christ, were made to partake in the tribulation of Jesus Christ; according to the church tradition under Domitian, the author of the first general persecution of Christians, while that under Nero was confined merely to Rome. When we look farther into the book, we are presented with the spectacle of a conflict of life and death waged by Satan against Christ, that had even then begun to burst forth. To delineate the course of this conflict and its glorious issue, seems to be the great object of the book. How should we, then, not listen eagerly to every word of such a book at a time, when Satan begins to make war on Christ and Christianity, on a scale that has never been attempted before! How should not we strive, through the

help of this book, to be companions of the patience of Jésus Christ, and thereby attain also to his kingdom! Especially since from that kingdom (ch. xxi. 8) the fearful are excluded, as well as the unbelieving and abominable and whoremongers, and murderers and sorcerers and idolaters; an express warning to us, who are so ready to regard failure in the patience of Jesus Christ as a light and venial fault—so ready, in our distrust of God, to think little of forgetting the word, Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh. That the Christian may remain stedfast and fearless where he is, even though it should be in the midst of a falling world, this book is fitted to render for such a purpose a most important service. We are not the first who have to make proof of it; it has already manifested its power to many thousands in all times of distress and persecution, who have constantly applied it to their hearts, while in more quiet times it has been less attended to and has even often been shamefully neglected. It has thus proved a blessing even to many, who but very imperfectly understood it. For it is wonderful, how the edifying power that resides in the book, forces its way even through the most imperfect understanding of its contents, if only the soul that applies to it is hungry and thirsty, weary and heavy laden, if it only stands in living faith on the divinity of Scripture and on the glorious consummation of the kingdom of Christ. Bengel's example may render this quite manifest. In nearly all the leading points he has failed in obtaining the right view; and yet what rich nourishment has he derived from this book for his own inner man and for many thousands besides!

One of the first questions in regard to the Revelation, which presses itself on us in an age of important movements like ours, is, where do we now stand? What have we behind, and what before us? The answer is, that we now have the thousand years' reign behind us, and stand at the loosing of Satan out of his prison at the end of the thousand years, and his going forth to deceive the heathen in the four quarters of the earth, and gather them together to battle (ch. xxi. 7—9.) This answer, which was given sometime ago in an article on the beast of the Apocalypse, has, as we foresaw, because opposed to the traditional and current view, found but little response, has estranged many, and given serious offence to some. This imposes on the author, who is

convinced of the soundnes of the answer, the obligation of going now more fully into the defence and vindication of it.

The surprise occasioned by the view we have set forth would certainly have been much less, if people had remembered, that the now current exposition, which is commonly regarded as the properly ecclesiastical one, and by which the millennium is held to be still future, was first rendered current by Bengel, and was adopted by the Pietists. Schröekh in his biographies of distinguished men of learning, Th. III., p. 98, says, "Since Bengel's time the disinclination toward Chiliasm, which previously was a mark of sound faith in our church, has disappeared with many." Bengel himself admits in a great number of places, that he had the prevailing sentiment in the church against him (Chiliasm, or the doctrine of the thousand years' reign as still future is well known to have been repudiated by the 17th Art. of the Augsburg Confession.) So in his Erklärten Offenbarung, p. 672, he says, "The still future years were held for suspicious (in the Evangelical church), and the greater part fell in with those, who bound themselves to no particular confession. These took the matter up the more zealously, and thereby made themselves the more hateful."[1] The lively conviction, that Satan's authority and power to deceive were broken from the time of Christ's appearance, gave rise to the opinion, which certainly had nothing in the connection to justify it, that the thousand years were to be reckoned from the birth of Christ. Cassiodorus, in support of this view, which through the authority of Augustine was the prevailing one during the whole of the middle ages, appeals to the unanimous consent of the fathers (qui tamen consensu patrum a nativitate domini computantur ne crediturus gentes libera potestate confunderet.[2]) On the ground of this exposition,

1 What is remarked above, however, has respect in its full compass only to the Lutheran church. In the reformed church, the opinion of a thousand years' reign still to arise in the future, had many adherents before the time of the Pietists. Wolf in his Curae says, Mille annos jam praeteriisse, nostratium theologorum communis est sententia.—Secundam sententiam (holding the period to be future) ex nostratibus nonnulli, in primis vero illi, qui a fanaticis sententiis parum sibi caverunt, nominatim, J. G. Petersenius, ex Reformatis vero multi exornandam susceperunt.

2 What Cassiodorus says here of the consent of the fathers certainly needs limitation. During the times, that a Christian theology was only in process of formation, very few references are to be found to the millennium—see Münscher, Die Lehre vom tausendjährigen Reiche in den drei ersten Jahrh. in Henke's Magazin Bd. VI. The belief was

people were, about the year 1000, in the most anxious expectancy regarding the things that were going to happen. "Churches and monasteries were allowed to fall into ruin, many princes and nobles went on pilgrimage to Rome, built hospitals for the poor and for pilgrims, as also abbeys, whither some constantly repaired to wait in daily expectation."

It is not quite accidental, that sects have constantly had a predilection for Chiliasm, while the church has been disinclined to adopt it. In the very nature of the sects there lies a practical denial of the confession, I believe in one holy, Catholic church. They are always disposed to confine within the circle of their own party what is good, what is Christian, what properly marks the operations of the Spirit—as, for example, in the programme of the Irvingite party it is declared without any circumlocution, There is Babylon, here is Zion. Being able to discern the divine only in some particular form, and incapable of discovering it even through the strange garb and disguises, which it often assumes, they must on this account alone be inclined to transfer the thousand years to the future, because they think they apprehend in them an essential advance; a state of the church much more satisfactory in the main than what has

very common, that there should be a resurrection of the righteous before the general resurrection, that there should be an intermingling of these risen ones with those who had not yet died, an external restoration of Jerusalem, with a mixing up together of that which is said in the Apocalypse of the thousand years' reign, and what is said of the New Jerusalem, reversing the order of Scripture, which ascribes the first stage of blessedness to heaven, the second to the earth. Thus Tertullian says, adv. Marci. L. 3, c. 25, "We confess, that a kingdom is promised us on earth, before we get to heaven, namely the thousand years' reign after the resurrection, in the city of Jerusalem, made by God, which comes down from heaven." Compare what Eusebius says in B. III. c. 28, of Cerinthus, Justin in his Dial. with Trypho, c. 80, Irenaeus B. V., c. 33. But this interpretation of the Apoc. never was unanimously received. Justin says, there were many, even among those, who held the pure doctrine, who did not share in this faith—see on this statement of Justin, Semisch's Justin Martyr, vol. II. p. 469. "It is well known, that there is not a single trace to be found of the Chiliastic views, neither in the epistles of the Roman Clement, of Ignatius and Polycarp, nor in the apologetical writings of Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus of Antioch." The vagaries of the Montanists who espoused these views, which already existed in the church, strengthened the disinclination to receive them. As theology grew into a more regular form, their untenableness became more clearly manifest. They were also repressed by the consideration, that the church, even under the ordinary human relations of life, might yet attain to the ascendancy. Lactantius is the last defender of Chiliasm of any name. The reaction against it in the ancient church was a sound one, though from the imperfection of exegetical resources, an ill choice was often made in the weapons employed by its opponents.

ever existed in the past; a state in which the power of Satan shall be broken, and the power of Christ shall be triumphant. Another reason for the circumstance may also be assigned. Chiliasm rests generally, even in its more spiritual forms, on an intermixture of things incompatible—of elements, which belong to time and to eternity. Bengel, for example, saw the untenable character of the common chiliastic views, according to which the corporeally risen saints should be members of the millennial kingdom on earth; since thus the resurrection would be separated from the regeneration of the earth, with which it is most closely connected, and makes the risen and glorified church be attacked by mortal men at the close of the thousand years. Bengel, therefore, conceives, that the risen saints shall be withdrawn to heaven, and from thence shall exercise the government along with Christ. But he still destroys the connection between the resurrection and the regeneration of the earth, and transfers to heaven what, according to Scripture, and the natural view belongs to the earth. Then, Bengel maintains on the one side the continuance of sin in the millennial period—and how, indeed, could he do otherwise, since the great apostacy at the end of it admits of explanation, only if the scarlet thread of sin goes through the entire period? "Among the children of the kingdom," says he, "there shall be to the very end of the world children of the wicked one; the conflict with sin in the flesh shall not be taken away, nor death itself be swallowed up in victory. There will, however, be new, high, and hitherto unknown trials and temptations, agreeing with the rich bestowal of the gifts of grace, in place of Satanic assaults and outward persecutions." But, on the other side, Bengel denies any continuance of the efficacy of Satan during the period in question, and thus involves himself in a quite unscriptural view of Satan's relation to sin: for as sin entered into the world through Satan, so is he always actively engaged in connection with it; he takes the word from the hearts of those, who hear it, that they may not believe and find salvation (Luke vii. 12); he has his work not merely in the children of unbelief, but believers also are sifted by him (Luke xxii. 31); they must constantly pray, that the Lord may deliver them from the wicked one, who would lead them into temptation; not Judas merely is exposed to his assaults, but Peter also

escapes from them no otherwise than through the intercession of the Lord. Now, the unsound state of sectaries accords with such interminglings of heterogenous things, while the sound mind of the church has a decided aversion to them. We must guard ourselves, however, against the appearance of supposing the honoured Bengel to be a party-man. What led him to adopt the chiliastic views, was above all his exegetical conscience. He believed he could not do otherwise, and contented himself with whatever was abnormal in the matter. He held with the church of his day, that the beast was the papacy. Chiliasm is the necessary consequence of this view. For, the thousand years' reign, according to ch. xix. 20, only begins with the destruction of the beast. Since, therefore, the destruction of the papacy has still not taken place, the thousand years must necessarily be transferred to the future. The common theology of the church had rescued itself from this consequence, with true ecclesiastical tact, but only by violently tearing the twentieth chapter from its connection. Bengel was too good an expositor to concur in such a procedure.[1] And the theology of the church was unable to oppose him; this could only have become possible, if any one had had the courage to abandon the false view of the beast, which had in a certain measure obtained the sanction of the church. Against those who stood fast by this interpretation, Bengel's reasoning was irresistible; and hence it came to pass, that after a feeble resistance from the orthodox, chiliasm obtained an almost universal diffusion through the church.

Strange truly is the prejudice against the view we have propounded of the thousand years' reign, as if it took from us somewhat of our consolation! as if it were fitted to overthrow our hope! a prejudice, which has been greatly strengthened by the too great support obtained by Bengel for the opinion advocated by him. On the contrary, it is very consolatory for us to know, that we have the thousand years already behind us; therefore, before us not the mere glimmering, but the clear day—not the preliminary victory, which is again to be succeeded by a heavy reverse, but the final conquest. If the old earth is always to get more corrupt and full of wickedness, it is a great consolation,

1 He says with perfect justice: Caeterum ne possum quidem simul cum temporibus bestiae currunt hi mille anni, neque ex toto illa hi praecedunt, sed ex toto sequuntur.

that we have got so far over the pilgrimage to the new earth, on which righteousness dwells.

We come now to a closer examination of the subject. The positive proof for our view is contained in the connection, in which the thousand years' reign is mentioned. Nor have we any need to go far back in investigating this. It is a fundamental error in the exposition of Bengel, and of many modern expositors, that they regard the Revelation as a progressive whole, proceeding in regular order from beginning to end. The right view is, that it is composed of a number of independent groups, each complete in itself, and each bringing prominently out some particular points, thus supplementing one another. For the establishment of this view it will be enough to point here to the one consideration, that undeniable references to the last end occur even in the beginning and the middle of the book. Thus, at ch. vi. 12—14, we are brought into the territory of Matt. xxiv. 29, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken;" consequently into the time immediately before the coming of the Son of man (comp. vers. 30 and 35.) After the episode in ch. vii., which represents the fate of the elect during the judgments disclosed in the preceding portion, as going to alight upon the world, we have that coming itself referred to in ch. viii. 1, "And when the seventh angel sounded, there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour;" for the silence is that of the creature frightened at the presence of its Creator and Lord, when appearing in the awful majesty of the judge. So, also, we stand at the final end, the detailed representation of which is given by the Seer only in the last group, in ch. xi. 15, as is placed beyond doubt by comparing ver. 18, "Thy wrath is come, and *the time for judging the dead.*" The end is also unquestionably referred to in ch. xiv. 14—16; and in ch. xvi. 17—21, comp. with xv. 1.—How few solid objections can be raised against this proof is clear alone from the constrained and violent interpretations, which the advocates of the regular progression have been obliged to adopt at the places referred to. —Now, the independent groups are altogether seven, in accordance with the great importance, which after the example of the

Old Testament is everywhere attached in this book to the number seven; as follows:

1. The seven epistles to the churches.
2. The seven seals.
3. The seven trumpets, ch. viii. 2—ch. xi. end.
4. The three enemies of the kingdom of God—Satan, the beast, and the false prophet, and their war upon it, ch. xii.—xiv.
5. The seven vials, ch. xv., xvi.
6. The judgment on the three enemies, beginning with the beast and the false prophet, and rising from them to Satan, ch. xvii.—xx.
7. The New Jerusalem.

If, therefore, we would ascertain from the connection the time to which the thousand years' reign belongs, we need not go farther back than ch. xvii., where we have an entirely new beginning, though forms certainly meet us which are pre-supposed to be known from what has gone before. Now, the result is not difficult to find here; it lies on the very surface. The thousand years' reign follows immediately on the destruction of the beast and the false prophet. If by these we are to understand (as we have already proved) the ungodly heathen power and wisdom, then the thousand years' reign cannot be future. For, in the regions which are everywhere kept mainly in view throughout this book, the lands of the Roman world, heathenism has for many centuries ceased to exist. Farther, as the last phase of the heathenish power of the world, with the overthrow of which the commencement of the thousand years' reign is immediately connected, the ten kings or peoples, who overthrew the Roman empire, appear in the preceding verse. If by these we are to understand the Germanic tribes, whose conversion to Christianity is represented in ch. xix. under the image of their conquest by Christ in a great battle, then the commencement of the millennium must be coincident with the Christianization of the Germanic tribes. Of this E. M. Arndt says, "We (Germans), and those races that are most nearly related to us, and whatever of our ancestors mingled with the wretched remains of the old world, have raised and carried forward in the most vigorous and beautiful manner the new European Christian life." This glory is now certainly gone, though only at the close of the thousand years, and we may well

lament with the poet, German people, once in glory so transcendant, your oaks remain, you are yourselves fallen. The beginning of the thousand years' reign is, accordingly, somewhat uncertain, and so also must be its end. In the main, however, it must coincide with the thousand years' continuance of the German ascendancy. How the period was tending to its close in the time of Bengel—how even then significant tokens discovered themselves of the approaching release of Satan from his prison, may be gathered from what he says at p. 588 of Erläuterten Offenbarung, "The filth of the despisers of God is now so incredibly great, that one may well doubt whether the devil himself could carry matters farther. Yet it is not to be imagined that they have brought matters to the highest pitch, or can do so immediately. They are but the beginners, the real master-raillers are still unborn." We may now say, that we have long dwelt, as in Meshech and Kedar, among these "master-raillers;" and any one that previously was not aware of it, must now during these last four weeks have known, that Satan has been completely loosed from his prison, and has gone forth to deceive the heathen in the four quarters of the earth, and gather them together to the battle. If we see in the past a visible proof of the faithfulness of God's word, in the overthrow of Rome, in the conversion of the Germanic world to Christ, and the great falling away at the end of the thousand years, so in regard to the remaining point, to the falling of fire from heaven and consuming them, which we should revolve day and night in our hearts, that we may not be afraid of their threatenings, it will be easy for us to look with confidence for the fulfilment.

Let us now examine the objections which are brought against our view of the thousand years' reign. It is alleged, first of all, that the contents of vers. 1—3 in ch. xx. cannot be proved to have had their fulfilment in the past, and must hence belong to the future. The deceiving of the heathen runs through the whole of the history that is already past, and its cessation, which is here given as the characteristic mark of the thousand years, must be looked for in the coming future. But the subject of discourse here, as the connection shews, is not Satan's deceiving in the general, but his deceiving with the view of stirring them up to an open attack on the kingdom of Christ, for the purpose of destroy-

ing it, and so as even to threaten its destruction. (Similarly even August. de civ. dei XX. 7 : Nec enim dictum est, ut non seduceret aliquem, sed ut non seduceret, inquit, jam gentes.) This more exact limitation of the meaning arises, on the one side, from the respect borne to what precedes, where such a conflict is spoken of, so great, public, and decisive, that the very existence of the kingdom of God was brought into question by it (comp. especially ch. xix. 19, 20.) The same result, on the other side, is obtained from what follows, ver. 7—9. Thus the deceiving of the heathen is more definitely explained, more narrowly bounded; and such a bounding, indeed, is demanded alone by the consideration, that at the end of the thousand years such a fearful assault is to be made, as is entirely inexplicable, on the supposition that the agency of Satan, and, what is closely connected therewith, sin, had altogether ceased during the thousand years.[1] But such being the case, there is no reason for denying the cessation of this deceiving of Satan according to the view we advocate. With all its corruptions, and in part also severe conflicts and losses in the case of individuals, it still was on the whole the period of Christ's undisputed sway. That a great change began at the end of it, must now at least, within the few last weeks, have become manifest even to those, who would drive too far the in many respects just, and by Scripture itself approved, dislike (Eccl. vii. 11) of extolling too highly past times.[2] During the period of the thousand years there are to be found no conflicts, which even remotely resemble those that precede, and come after it. Mahommedanism belongs only in part to it, and it left untouched the original ground of Christendom ; it never brought matters to such a point as to raise the question, whether there should be or should not be a kingdom of Christ on the earth. The papacy can only be regarded, after an unhistorical mode of viewing it, against which Luther himself protested, when he was not carried away by

1 The following remark of Bengel is certainly not in accordance with the scriptural mode of representation: "The nations shall still be so constituted, that they could be deceived, if the devil were not in prison." We must not take the prison in *so grossly* external a manner. It is a mere figure, and simply denotes the restraining of his influence, the pre-requisite of which is, that the hearts and peoples sincerely given to Christ continue steadfast in their adherence to him.

2 Vitringa would *now* certainly no longer ask: Haeccine acta fuerunt et gesta Satana ligato et detruso in abyssum? Quid igitur tandem fiet Satano soluto? And yet Satan has but begun his work.

the spirit of controversy, as standing on a level with ancient and modern heathenism. It is this very mode of viewing it, unhappily wide-spread and deeply rooted in former times, which has especially led to the abandoning of the historical ground, in determining the position of the thousand years, and flying off to the future. The thought has also had much influence, which is expressed by Bengel at p. 581, "Those make far too little of the matter, who understand the thousand years of something that is past, and consequently something quite insignificant." He who looks thus upon the past in the Christian church, at the same time cuts up, without perceiving it, the root of a living and reasonable hope for the future. If the word, "Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world," has been kept so badly in the past, it will be foolish to expect, that it should suddenly begin in the future to receive a glorious fulfilment. It is so also with the individual believer; his hope respecting the future is a living hope, exactly in the same degree, that he can discern the blessing of God, which is concealed under the cross, the grace that lies hid behind sin; which *he* only can do, who can say from the heart, What I know not, teach thou me. That view of the papacy (whose dominion, besides, comprehends only a part of the thousand years, while, again, this period embraces the Reformation, and the whole spring-time of the evangelical churches[1]), is a reproach on our own origin. The Reformation pre-supposes the existence of glorious powers of life, though in a slumbering state. Now that we have about us the Gog and Magog of unbelief, and no longer stand within the thousand years, we should feel our impotence, and call on the Lord to strengthen our weakness.

Another objection against our view of the thousand years' reign is taken from ver. 4—6. According to what is written there the resurrection of the righteous must take place at the beginning of the thousand years, and these must continue on the earth during the whole millennial period. As nothing of this sort is to be perceived in the past, it is, men think, clear as day, that the thousand years still belong to the future.

1 The natural exposition of the Apocalypse runs as directly counter to the extravagancies of Catholic controversialists, as it does to those of the Evangelical party. The prevailing view of the Reformation in the Catholic church cannot be the right one, if the spring-season of the Evangelical church falls within the thousand years. The Satanic territory must, therefore, lie in another direction than that, which separates the Evangelical from the Catholic church.

But it should be quite sufficient to shew the fallacy of such an argument, that it leads to a perfectly monstrous combination of things incapable of union: the church consisting of a mixture of members, partly living in mortal flesh, and partly risen and glorified —the latter abiding on the unrenewed earth, though as such only fit for the dwelling of mortal men; the risen and glorified at the end of the thousand years, entangled anew in the troubles of earth, in war and conflict, which belong only to a present existence, and driven out of that rest from their labours which was promised them.

Let us now first present our view of the verses under consideration, and then advance what favours it and opposes the view we reject.

The whole book is designed to stimulate to patience, to stedfastness, to unmoved fidelity, and hearty joyfulness, those who are endangered by the pressure of the world against the kingdom of Christ. The chief means employed to accomplish this design, is a representation of the victory of Christ on earth, which takes place at every great conflict. This, however, is not altogether sufficient to inspire courage. Those who fall in this warfare, who depart in times of trouble and distress, who do not live to see the periods of triumph and peace, need some further consolation. The holy Seer directs their eye to the heavenly glory, amid which they are kept till the time, that the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven. Thus in ch. vii. 1—8 it is represented how God, in the midst of the great tribulations which befal the earth, keeps his own people; then in ver. 9—17 the view opens on the heavenly glory, which causes all the tribulations of earth to be forgotten. So also in ch. xiv. 1—5, after a delineation has been given of the cruel procedure of the beast on earth, and how those are kept in safety who would not worship his image, suddenly the curtain is lifted, and we see the Lamb standing on the heavenly Zion, and with him the whole multitude of the elect, who, with one voice, like that of many waters and of loud thunder, sing the new song of the Lamb, the earth with its temptations to apostacy lying wholly under their feet. This same multitude meets us again in ch. xv. 2—4. They appear there standing on a sea of glass mingled with fire, on the ground of Ps. xxxvi. 7, "Thy judgments are a great flood," the symbol of the divine

acts of righteousness and judgment, and sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. The section before us is entirely similar in its structure. It contains nothing which belongs to the earth, and on the fulfilment of which history could give us its report. It rather leads us from the earth, and from the triumph which has been granted on earth to the cause and the servants of Christ to heaven, that we may see there the glory of those who had departed before the beginning of the thousand years, who were slain for the word of God and the testimony which they had, and loved not their lives to the death. The resurrection is ascribed to these persons only in a figurative sense, that, namely, of a transition into a new and glorious existence; as is indicated by the expression, "this is the *first* resurrection," employed for the purpose of distinguishing it from the second resurrection, which is that more commonly meant by the term.[1]

Now this view is first confirmed by the expression: they lived, or were again living. From this it is clear, that *before* the first resurrection the persons who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and who had not worshipped the beast, had enjoyed no life worthy of this name. Now, if the bodiless existence of the departed righteous were a mere life of shadows, we might certainly conclude that nothing would be said of it, as is the case in respect to those who have not died in the faith. But the contrary is found to be the case. The Apocalypse points in the most attractive colours to the blessedness which the redeemed enjoy, even before the resurrection; they stand before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, and praise God and the Lamb, and serve him day and night in his temple (comp. ch. xiv. 1—5, vii. 9—17.) Such a blessed state cannot be ignored, it cannot be put on a footing with non-existence, and so nothing remains but to understand it as meant by the first resurrection.

Further, if we suppose here that a literal resurrection is meant,

[1] The first resurrection corresponds to the second death. In respect to both alike the Seer distinguishes the figurative from the proper use of the term by an additional word. Those who boast of holding by the latter, who think that the subject of discourse here must plainly be the resurrection in the literal sense, have in reality the letter against them. In the expression: the *first* resurrection, there is contained a distinct reference to the diversity. To understand the *first* merely of priority of time is forbidden by the analogy of the second death, which differs materially from the first.

it must appear very singular that nowhere else in Scripture is any mention made of such a resurrection of the righteous *before* the general resurrection. For it does not at all follow from the passages, 1 Cor. xv. 22, 23; Luke xiv. 14, 15; 1 Thess. iv. 16 what Ewald would still draw from them, that the righteous shall be raised at the last day before the wicked; they do not speak of a *before* and an *after*, but treat simply of the resurrection of the righteous. Such a resurrection, however, as is now supposed, is not merely ignored; it is also expressly denied. Thus in 1 Cor. xv. 22, 23, "For as by one man came death, so also by one man comes the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every one in his own order; Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's *at his coming*." By this passage the resurrection only takes place at the period of Christ's coming. This, however, is not connected with the thousand years' reign, but with the time of the New Jerusalem, of which it is said in ch. xxi. 3, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them;" and in ch. xxi. 22, "And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord, the Almighty God, is its temple, and the Lamb." Such a resurrection is also disproved by 1 Thess. iv. 16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first."[1] By this passage, too, the view of Bengel, which holds the resurrection to be corporeal, indeed, but holds heaven, and not the earth, to be the habitation of the risen saints, is excluded. It must then have been Christ's descending from heaven along with the saints, who had risen before and gone to heaven with their glorified bodies, that was spoken of —not Christ's raising them up, but his coming down with them.

[1] Quite fruitless is the attempt of Flatt, in his adnotationes ad locum 1 Thess. iv. 16, etc. coll. cum Apoc. opusc. 409, etc. to bring these passages into unison with ours, on the ground that the latter treats of the literal resurrection. He thinks that those should be excepted from "the dead in Christ," to whom the first resurrection is accorded in the Revelation. But this first resurrection of the Revelation belongs to *all* the dead in Christ; not merely to the martyrs, but also to all those, "who had not worshipped the beast, nor his image, and had not received his mark on their forehead and *on* their hand." The "rest of the dead," who do not live during the course of the thousand years, are the ungodly (for ver. 11, sq. shew how it went with them *after* the thousand years, how positive punishment succeeds to the loss of an interest in the previously mentioned good.) The *books* are only the books of guilt; and the book of life is merely opened to shew, that their names were not there. They are all appointed to the second death.

This is also to be taken into account, that the change on the living is coupled by Paul with the resurrection of the saints that are asleep. But such a change can only take place in connection with the general *regeneration* (Matth. xix. 28), with the new heavens and the new earth. John v. 28, 29 also, "The hour cometh, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, but they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation," hardly admits of the thought of a wide separation between the resurrection of life and that of condemnation.

Finally, after the example of our Lord himself in Luke xviii. 8, "When the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth?" and in Matth. xxiv., especially ver. 10, sq. 37, sq., Scripture generally testifies, that in the last times apostacy shall be very widely spread, and that even among the faithful the fire of their love and zeal shall be sadly cooled. Such descriptions, however, will not suit a church, which consists to a large extent of the risen saints; nor even a church, which has just passed out of the thousand years, on the hypothesis of Bengel. They require, that we must not attribute more to the Christian church than she has possessed in the past.

If, then, it is to be finally maintained, that ver. 4—6 refer to those who are concealed from our view, that for what was to happen on this earthly stage we have but one mark given, in the continuance of the dominion of Christ during a period of a thousand years,—for the just made perfect reign *with Christ* during the thousand years—and that the other features of the thousand years' reign are to be derived only from ver. 1—3, then we shall certainly find no other reason why we should seek it in the future instead of in the past; since there would then be the great impropriety, that the church's thousand years of a settled state would be passed over with perfect silence in the Revelation. What is said of the thousand years, is but a brief and simple notice, and is never in the remotest manner to be compared with the glory of the new Jerusalem, to which St John hastens forward with longing desire and with rapid step—a clear proof, that in the thousand years we are to seek no heaven upon earth.[1]

[1] Ewald: Vates breviter tantum et festinanter regnum hoc milliare tangit, beatorumque praemia in regnum demum mundi novi coeleste sedulo cumulat omnia, xxi. 1—22,

Ch. xx. 7—10. It was intimated at ver. 3, that at the end of the thousand years there should be a great change in the relation of Satan to the earth. To that intimation reference is here made. After the thousand years are finished, Satan is loosed from his confinement, and deceives Gog and Magog, that is, the heathen over the whole earth, to come and fight against Christ and his church. The project succeeds well at first, so that the adversaries lay siege to the camp of the saints and the beloved city. But after a brief triumph they are overtaken by the vengeance of heaven. Fire comes down from heaven and consumes them. Satan is cast into the lake of fire. So that, what was designed to overthrow the begun supremacy of Christ, serves only to complete it. With the final discomfiture of Satan the last of the three enemies of Christ and of his church has forever vanished from the field.

Vitringa says, "The church appears to have reached the end of her conflicts and labours with the execution of judgment on the beast. Christ reigns with his saints, and the kingdoms of the world yield obedience to him and the church. *Whence then these new enemies at the close of the thousand years?*" To this question we reply: the reason of Satan's being loosed must stand in close connection with the reason of his being bound. The earth watched and prayed during the thousand years; therefore, Satan could accomplish nothing against it. But if the earth should cease to watch and pray, it must necessarily fall into temptation. Where God is no longer present, there Satan is sure to come with his evil spirits. The passage, Matth. xii. 43—45, "When the unclean Spirit," etc. deserves here the most attentive consideration. Satan works only in the children of disobedience; and he works wherever the children of disobedience are to be found, (Eph. ii. 2.) If at any time he is to be seen actually among those, who have already belonged to Christ, this implies, according to the whole teaching of Scripture, a backsliding on the part of these; and the more extensive and successful his work of deception is, the greater always must the preceding guilt have been.

Vitringa was in great perplexity to know whence these new heathen were to come. Mede expected them from America. But Bengel, with his profound discernment, perceived even in his day

25; *tardarique* paratam jam piis salutem summam in regno coelesti ex ch. xix. 7, coll. xxi. 2 concludas.

the beginnings of the germinating heathenism. "At present," says he, "there is such security, and along therewith such mockery amongst high and low, appearing in a shameless profligacy and a covert unbelief, that one is apt to think, Satan himself could not conduct matters in a more indecent and scandalous manner; but what has yet been done is no more than child's play. People are still but apprentices in respect to the last dreadful times, when the spirit of carnal security and profane mockery shall rise to the complete mastery." It is said also in the Berleb. Bible, "Enough still secretly remains, which can be productive of mischief. And the lees shall yet be stirred up for a great final effort, as Pharaoh gave the last violent kick when he pursued after the Israelites."

There are two prophecies of the Old Testament which are closely connected with the one before us. In the prophecy of Daniel respecting the monarchies of the world the little horn corresponds which threw down three of the great. The characteristic features there are, the difference between this new worldly power and the earlier ones,[1] the hatred manifested against God and his church, the undertaking to change times and laws (*i.e.*, to abolish all holy and profane, divine and human institutions and laws), its prosperity and success, as appearing in the overthrow of three of the earlier kingdoms, and getting even the church into its power, and, lastly, the coincidence of the end of the world with its overthrow.

The other passage is the prophecy of Ezekiel against Gog the king of Magog, the chief prince[2] of Mesech and Tubal, in ch. xxxviii., xxxix. The case is different in respect to this prophecy, from what it is with Daniel's regarding the little horn. While the latter goes upon a particular fact in the future history of the

1 This difference forms the reason why John has separated this last enemy of the church from the earlier ones, while in Daniel there were reasons for rather bringing into view the elements that belonged to this in common with the others. Wherein the difference consisted, we learn more definitely from John than we can do in Daniel.

2 His original kingdom is Magog, but along with this he acquires the mastery over Meshech and Tubal. In vain have some tried, latterly Knobel, to change the *chief* prince into a prince of Russia. The prince of Rosse (an appellation not known in Scripture) Meshech and Tubal, Gog could not be called without some farther explanation, as Meshech and Tubal are represented in Scripture as independent kingdoms, which were not *directly* subject to the king of Magog. This person could become a head to them only as a "king of kings."

world, the prophecy of Ezekiel possesses a thoroughly ideal, composite character. Gog and Magog represent generally all the future enemies of the kingdom of God, and there is here combined into one grand delineation, what was to be realized in a long series of events; so that the interpretations, which would understand it of the Syrian kings, of the Goths and Vandals, or of the Turks, are all at once true, and at the same time false, on account of their exclusiveness. Ezekiel had been prophecying immediately before of Israel's return from exile, and his redemption from the oppression of the enemy, who then was permitted to bear sway. And the disquieting thought, that it was not enough to have achieved one victory, the fear, which takes such deep hold of the diseased, that some new trouble may come after they have recovered from that, under which they at present labour, this is met by the prophet with the announcement, that whatever the earth might still raise up of evil against the kingdom of God, even if it should bring up all that is terrible from its furthest corners, powers that were hitherto scarcely known, to war against the kingdom, this should still at last gain the victory. For a strong rock is our God. Every one who yields to the native impression this prophecy is fitted to produce, must at once feel, that there is something *utopian* about it; that it is essentially different from such prophecies, for example, as refer to the overthrow of the Assyrians or the Chaldeans. Its composite character discovers itself with peculiar clearness in ch. xxxviii. 5, 6, where along with Gog and Magog peoples from the most diverse regions of the world are mentioned as taking part in the expedition, who had no natural connection with them, or with one another. "Ezekiel here names and brings together only such tribes and races as were far distant, some more and others less known." That an exposition, which seeks for a literal fulfilment in some historical event, is against the real meaning of the prophet, is manifest also from the freedom with which he forms a king, Gog, out of the name of the land Magog, which alone is mentioned in Gen. x. 2. So is it, again, from ver. 17, according to which the earlier prophets had prophesied of Gog. These had only spoken in general of the enemies of God's kingdom. But that John did not view the prophecy otherwise than is now represented, is plain from this, that according to ch. xix. 17 he even sees in the subjugation of the ten

kings through Christ *one* fulfilment of it. It is plain also from the consideration, that with the utmost freedom, he changes the king Gog in Ezekiel into a people Gog, together with Magog. Finally, it appears from his entirely removing the local and national limitation, which in Ezekiel still attaches to Gog and Magog, and considering Gog and Magog as simply identical with the heathen in the four corners of the earth.

Ver. 7. *And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.* This is properly the only case in the Apocalypse, in which the future as such is announced beforehand, while John elsewhere, and here also again in ver. 9, only describes what he has seen and heard. In ch. xi. 3 the same thing has been thought to be found, though improperly; for there John does not speak. In ch. ix. 6 the future is brought in through the reference to the fundamental passage of Jeremiah. There also, as in ch. xiii. 8, the future is only so far announced beforehand, as it makes itself perceived from what John saw before his eyes. The exception here arises from the necessity of the case: a simple pre-intimation must first carry us to the farther side of the thousand years.—He, who looses Satan, is no other than the Lord himself, who has the key of the abyss, (ver. 1), and without whose will Satan can never move a step, as is manifest from the history of Job; nor could the demons without his permission so much as enter into the herd of swine. The Lord sends to those, who have lost their love to the truth, through the medium of Satan, strong delusions, that they should believe lies, and so become ripe for judgment, (2 Thess. ii. 11, comp. Rom. i. 24, 26.) It is the punishment of ingratitude and apostacy, that it always goes farther and farther down, much more so than the spirit of infidelity itself originally contemplated.—The evil enemy is here called Satan, in ver. 10 the devil. The dragon is mentioned no more. Corresponding to the dragon is the heathen state, that culminates in the heathen kings. So far, however, matters are not to come again. If the Christian state may be everywhere perforated by the evil, and in part destroyed, as it cannot fail to be, where the mass yields to the seductions of Satan, still Satan never can again succeed so far, as to pluck the Christian state up by the root, and to establish himself as the dragon. It is in accordance with Satan's having no longer the name of the dragon,

that the Antichristian world receives the name of Gog and Magog. Even in Ezekiel, Magog bears the character, not of a regularly constituted state, but of a horde of plunderers. The lawlessness of the party is still more strongly marked here, by Gog, who appears in Ezekiel as the head of Magog, being viewed as a distinct people, and acting in concert with Magog.—The prison is, according to ver. 2, the abyss.—The loosing of Satan, we learn in ver. 2, is only to be for a short time. Bengel: "How long this short time is to be, cannot well be conjectured; but we may certainly conclude, that it must be brief as compared with the thousand years."

Ver. 8. *And he will go forth to deceive the heathen in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war,*[1] *the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.* In what manner Satan goes forth, and accomplishes the deception, we learn from ch. xvi. 13. He does it by means of the unclean spirit that goes out of him.—According to the current view we are to understand by the heathen in the four corners of the earth the nations, that occupy the most distant regions of the earth.[2] But this interpretation is against the biblical usage. In Judges xx. 2, the expression, "the corners of the whole people," is used for, the whole people from the beginning to the end, "all the tribes of Israel," as is immediately added by way of explanation; or "from Dan to Beersheba" as it is in ver. 1. The explanation: the foremost of the whole people, is there against the connection. In 1 Sam. xiv. 38, Saul says, "Draw ye near hither all corners of the people." That the whole body of the people is meant, is clear from ver. 40. In Isa. xix. 13 it is said, "They have deceived Egypt, the corners of his tribes," for, his tribes even to their furthest corners. (In Gen. xix. 4, כל העם מקצה corresponds.) In these passages the corners possessed whatever lay within them, and was bounded by them: all the corners of the people, is as much as, all the people

1 If we read εἰς τὸν πόλεμον, the article must be taken generically, and in substance the other reading, without it, conveys the same meaning. The war stands opposed to other possible objects of the gathering together.

2 So already Vitringa: Designantur gentes, quae non habitarent in media et praestantissima terrarum orbis parte, quippe quae occupata esset ab ecclesia, sed in extremis terrae.

even to its furthest corners; as in this book also at ch. vii. 1, the corners are brought into consideration as the points, which rule the whole earth. So is it also in respect to the four *borders* of the earth in Isa. xi. 12; *q.d.*, of the whole earth, as far as it stretches. Comp. Ezek. vii. 2, "The end comes on the four borders of the earth," Job. xxxvii. 3. Accordingly, here also the four corners of the earth are not the points, where the people to be deceived alone or even chiefly dwell, but the corners are regarded as commanding the whole region that lies within them; so that the four corners of the earth, is all one with, on the whole earth even to its four corners. The deceptive influence exercised by Satan is represented as one, that is not to be confined to some one particular land or people, but one that was to possess an entirely oecumenical character; precisely as we see at present to be the case. To the four corners of the earth correspond the *breadth* of the earth in ver. 9. The territory on which the cause operates here, is the same as that on which the operation appears there. This view is confirmed by the fundamental prophecy in Ezekiel. There along with Gog, who comes from the north, other nations also are mentioned as taking part in the expedition, who dwell in the middle regions.—Gog and Magog form the epexegesis to the nations in the four corners of the earth. Ezekiel represents Gog as the centre of the whole movement (ch. xxxviii. 5, 6.) But here the ground of Gen. x. 2, is entirely abandoned, and Gog and Magog are simply identified with all heathen. Gog, Magog, and Demagog, were first put together by Brentano. It is such a conjunction as that of Napoleon and Apollyon.—*In the war*, Bengel, "Then all evil will raise itself up against all good, and hazard the last blow, but shall be worsted by the better part."—*As the sand of the sea*, as were also the host of the Canaanites, Josh. xi. 4, the camels of the Midianites, Judg. vii. 12, and the Philistines, 1 Sam. xiii. 5.

Ver. 9. *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down out of heaven from God, and consumed them.* The *going up* is used of any warlike expedition, because the object of it appears a height to be ascended and taken.[1] By the

1 Somewhat differently Gesenius in his Thes. on עלה: Quoniam urbes castraque expugnanda in loco edito extructa sunt.

breadth of the earth the whole compass of it is denoted. In Hab. i. 6, the Chaldeans march "through the breadth of the earth," that is, they go through it after its whole extent and compass, comp. Isa. viii. 8; Gen. xiii. 17; Job xxxviii. 18. Those deceived by Satan are, according to ver. 8, scattered over the entire breadth of the earth; but others also dwell with them, who do not yield to the seduction. Against these they now go forth; they would possess the whole compass of the earth, and verify the opposite of the statement, "the meek shall inherit the earth." And it appeared as if they were going to succeed, not less than of old when Assyria marched against Jerusalem.—One can suppose that the church is here denoted by two distinct and independent images, that of the *camp* and that of the *city*. But we may also suppose that the camp of the saints is *placed in the beloved city*, as in Acts xxi. 34 the fortified camp of the Romans in the city of Jerusalem is spoken of, comp. ver. 37, xxii. 24, xxiii. 10, 16, 32. Any how, the prefixing of the expression: the camp of the saints, indicates the warlike and armed condition, which is an essential characteristic of the saints, whose spiritual armoury is described in Eph. vi. 10, sq., comp. 1 John ii. 14, v. 4. In the times of Moses and Joshua the church even externally presented the form of a military camp, (comp. Heb. xiii. 11), imaging what in substance was to be continued through all times.—The *beloved city* is Jerusalem, but Jerusalem is in the Apocalypse always used as a symbol of the church (comp. vol. i. p. 425.) Prosperous events, times in which the contest should assume a milder character, are not excluded by their being said to encompass the camp. As little are they excluded by the enemies being represented as pressing into the outworks of the holy city—comp. ch. xi. 2. Our Lord said of the literal Jerusalem, in Luke xix. 43, "Days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side." The same state of things shall here also take place, and indeed for the same reason, as a deserved punishment; for if the church had done her duty, Satan would never have been able by his deceptions to make such way against her. But nothing shall now happen like what is said in ver. 44, "And they shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone

upon another." For, *this* Jerusalem, with all its failings, still is the beloved city of God; and the word can never hold respecting it, which was spoken of ancient Jerusalem, "My house is an house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."—By faith the walls of Jericho of old fell when they had been compassed for seven days (Hebr. xi. 30.) By faith also shall the walls of the beloved city be preserved. The fervent prayer of the faithful calls down fire from heaven (comp. at ch. viii. 3—5.)—After Satan has made those ripe for judgment, who through their guilt have been led away by him, the divine judgment falls upon the deceiver and the deceived. First upon the latter. The words, "And fire came down out of heaven from God," refer to Gen. xix. 24, "And the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven;" to which also, as the image of all future judgments of God on the wicked, allusion is made in Ezek. xxxviii. 22, xxxix. 6. Here, this allusion, especially after the peculiar combination of the expressions, "out of heaven," and "from God," cannot be doubtful. The "from God" appeared a superfluous addition to some copyists, who did not perceive the reference to the fundamental passage. That it is not, however, to be regarded as a simple repetition from that passage, is plain from the order being the reverse of that there. It is there, from the Lord out of heaven; here, out of heaven from the Lord. The heaven forms here the contrast to the earth, God to Satan. From the allusion to Gen. xix., it is clear, that nothing is here indicated respecting the form of the judgment. What appears to refer to it, belongs to the ancient type. So much, however, may be regarded as certain, that here an unexpected, quick, frightful, overwhelming execution of divine vengeance is represented.

Ver. 10. *And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where also*[1] *are the beast and the false prophet, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* The *everlasting fire*, is, according to the word of our Lord in Matt. xxv. 41, prepared first of all for Satan and his angels. The cursed from among men are to be sent there as companions to them.—We have here the third and last station

1 The *also* is wanting in the text, which Luther followed.

of Satan. In ch. xii. 9, he is cast down from heaven on the earth; in ch. xx. 3, into the abyss, hell; here, at last, into the lake of fire and brimstone, the deeper hell (comp. at ch. xix. 20.) On the words, "they shall be tormented," etc., see at ch. xiv. 11.

THE END OF THE WORLD.

(Ch. xx. 11—15.)

The three enemies of God's kingdom have disappeared. There must now still follow the final and ultimate decision respecting the fate of those, who submitted to their influence; and all, too, of the irrational creation, which had been pressed by them into the service of sin, must be put out of the way. The latter in ver. 11, the first in ver. 12—15. This being done, all is then prepared for the new earth, on which righteousness dwells, for the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God; and, therefore, for the beginning of the seventh and last vision.

Ver. 11. *And I saw a white great throne, and him who sat thereon, before whose presence the earth and the heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.* The white *throne* here corresponds to the white *cloud* in ch. xiv. 14. The white is here also the symbolical image of glory. In ch. iv. 3, the crystal clear jasper corresponds. A *great* throne, in contrast to the thrones in ver. 4, on account of the greatness and glory of him who sits on it. Short and good, Bengel: "The throne is *white* as an emblem of the glory of the judge, and *great* as befits his great and infinite majesty."—He who *sits* on the throne is *God in the undivided unity of his being*, without respect to the diversity of persons (see at ch. i. 8); not the Father in fellowship with Christ, according to ch. iii. 21, where Christ sits with the Father on his throne, vii. 17, where the Lamb is spoken of as being in the midst of the throne, xxii. 1, where, again, we read of the throne of God and the Lamb. For, here only *one* is represented as sitting. Nor are we to regard this one as the Father in contradistinction to Christ. It is against this view, that especial mention is not made here of

Christ, as at ch. iv. (comp. iv. 2); but Christ, to whom all judgment has been committed by the Father, (John v. 22; Rev. i. 7, xiv. 14, xix. 11) cannot, according to the fundamental passages, (especially Matth. xix. 28, xxv. 31, comp. Acts xvii. 31; Rom. xiv. 10), fail to be present particularly at the last judgment. Nor yet can it be Christ in contradistinction to the Father. For, there is nothing that specially pointed to him; ch. xxi. 6 is against the supposition; and in the first work, that proceeds from him who sits upon the throne, the removal of the traces of sin out of creation, a reference could not fail to the Almighty Creator, who appears here restoring his original work.—That we have not in the words, "before whose presence the earth and the heaven fled away," a merely poetical description of the frightfulness of the Judge, at whose presence all creation trembles, is plain from the appended clause, "and no place was found for them," which was also employed to denote a disappearing, a complete removal at ch. xii. 8. Accordingly, it is justly remarked on the fleeing away by Bengel, "not from one place to another, but so that no place whatever should be found;" comp. the fleeing in the sense of vanishing away in ch. xvi. 20. The same thing may also be inferred from Ps. cxiv. 3, 4, "The sea saw and fled, Jordan and turned back. The mountains skipt like rams, the hills like lambs." There, too, it is a real flight, an actual concussion that is spoken of (see my Comm.) What was done there on the small scale, is done here on the great one. Finally, all doubt is excluded by ch. xxi. 1, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." Hence, the representation here can only be, how the first heaven and the first earth vanished away, in order that the new creation might take their place.—It is taught even in the Old Testament, that the present earth and heavens shall pass away (see my Comm. on Ps. cii. 26, 27.) In the New Testament this doctrine is indicated in Matth. xxiv. 35; it is implied in what the Saviour says of the regeneration in Matth. xix. 28; but the properly classical passage is 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10—12, where, as here, the destruction of the present heavens and the present earth is put in connection with the day of judgment and the destruction of ungodly men. St John gives expression to this truth in 1 John ii. 17, "The world passeth away with the lust thereof, but he who doeth the will of God,

abideth for ever." It lies also at the bottom of what he says in his Gospel respecting the last day, vi. 39, xii. 48. For, the last day can only be the day for the ceasing of the whole existing order of things.—The earth and the heaven could not be brought into consideration here according as they proceeded from the creative hand of God, but only as they have become altered by the fall—partly as the dwelling-place of human and satanic wickedness (Gen. vi.), partly as changed by the avenging hand of God (Gen. iii. 17—19, v. 29), so that the word, "behold it was all very good," could no longer be taken absolutely, but must be understood as applying to the creation only when this is viewed in connection with the fall. Because sin has manifested itself especially on the *earth*, this is here placed foremost. The common and natural order is never inverted but for some special reason (comp. Zech. v. 9; Gen. ii. 4.) But the heavens, too, have not been free from the operation of sin. They are indeed often red and troubled (Matth. xvi. 3); they are often clothed in darkness and veiled in sackcloth of hair (Isa. l. 3); to break the pride and stubbornness of men the heavens are often made as iron, and the earth as brass, so that the land does not yield its increase, and all labour and work is lost, (Lev. xxvi. 19, 20, comp. Deut. xi. 17, xxviii. 23.) But there are not wanting indications of Scripture, that even the high regions of heaven have been invaded and defiled by sin, through the angels, who did not keep their first estate, but forfeited their proper dwelling (Jude ver. 6); that disturbances are to be found even there, remaining as memorials of the fall of the angels, till they shall be purged away by the final judgment, which is also to be exercised upon the angels and Satan (2 Pet. ii. 4.) Indications of these things occur in Job xv. 15, "Behold he does not trust in his saints, and the heavens are not clean in his sight;" ch. xxv. 5, "Behold, even in the moon he dwells not, and the stars are not pure in his eyes."—In this section the order follows not the time, but the circumstances; first heaven and earth, then the wicked. How the destruction of the present heavens and earth stands related in point of time to the judgment of the wicked, nothing is here said.

Ver. 12. *And I saw the dead, the small and the great, stand*

1 Vitringa: expurgabit haec terra sua excrementa, liberanda a vanitate, cui nunc servit.

before the throne, and books were opened, and another book was opened, which is (the book) of life. And the dead were judged according to that which was written in the books, according to their works.[1] The *dead* can only be the ungodly dead. It must alone appear singular, that here the dead are still spoken of, although they must have been raised up, before they could stand before the throne. If only the ungodly dead are meant, then there is nothing strange in the matter. For *their* life after the resurrection is but a life in semblance, as it was also before in Hades. Even in their bodily life they were still dead, as is intimated in the word of Christ, "Let the dead bury their dead." But it is still of much greater moment in this respect, that John had seen in ver. 4, how those that slept in Jesus before the beginning of the thousand years then *lived* and reigned with Christ. It was impossible that he should have seen these, and such as stood with them in like circumstances, such as died in the Lord during the thousand years and in the war of Gog and Magog, as mixed up with the dead here, and should have included them all under that name. An unseasonable comparison of Matth. xxv. 31, sq., where we find the righteous and the wicked united in one scene of judgment, and where the due distinction was not made between the substance and the dramatic form, has here been productive of much confusion, and has led to the dead being generally viewed,[2] as *all the dead without exception*. Here also, where only the ungodly dead are the object of judgment, where the internally different are regarded as also externally distinct, we must distinguish between form and substance. The scene of judgment is of no farther importance than as forming part of the representation. In substance they have been judged already; they have been already cast into Hades (ver. 13), and this pours out its whole contents into the lake of fire. Besides, to confine *death* only to the wicked is in perfect accordance with the style of John; comp. John v. 24, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life;" viii. 51, "Verily, verily I say unto you, If a man keep my say-

[1] Luther omits the article before *small and great* in this verse, and also follows the reading which has "before God," after *the throne*.

[2] Cocceius, however, took the right view: intelligi homines mortuos in lapsibus et in praeputio carnis, qui hactenus non revixerant, coll. v. 5.

ing, he shall never see death;" 1 John iii. 14. *It is quite characteristic of John, that he delights to take death and life in their profoundest meaning.* In ch. xi. 18 also of this book, the dead are the lost dead. Because the judgment here has respect only to the ungodly dead, God in Christ appears *alone* as judge, and not, as in the judgment that respects the righteous, surrounded by the heavenly council of the church, (comp. ver. 4; Matth. xix. 28.)—In regard to the *small* and the *great*, comp. on ch. xi. 18, xiii. 16. How does the splendour of the great (who are here to be pronounced with emphasis) now become pale! How completely does all the fear they awakened vanish away!—The words, "and the books were opened," is from Dan. vii. 10, although there *another* judgment is spoken of. From the contrast with the other book, which is the book of life, the books can only be those of guilt, of condemnation, of death, as they are also in the fundamental passage. But that this should be presupposed, as a thing to be understood of itself, arises simply from the contents of the books having their character more exactly determined by the condition of the persons to whom they relate. Bengel remarks: "This will be a complete, true, impartial, universal-history."—Why the *book of life* (comp. at ch. iii. 5, xiii. 8, xvii. 8), should be opened, may be learned from ver. 15; it was to shew, that they had not been written there. The positive use of this book is given in ver. 4. A name cannot be both written in the books and in the book of the Lamb. For, he whose name is in the book of life, is one whose guilt has been purged away by the blood of the Lamb (comp. 1 John i. 9, here at ch. xiii. 8); but the books contain the record only of unforgiven sins. Bengel: "Every one is either righteous or unrighteous; he cannot be half righteous, half unrighteous. The unrighteous often do things that have a good name; but these are not on that account fruits of righteousness. The righteous, on the other hand, have their sins; but they have also their sufferings for these, and obtain through supplication the pardon of their guilt."—"The single book of life opened is opposed to the many books of works, that are also opened." The difference as to the many and the one is either to be explained on the consideration, that but few are saved, or because the book of life contains simply the names, while the books of the dead contain

the long array of their evil deeds. The *judgment* is here, as in ch. xi. 18, and the parallel passages quoted there from the Gospel of John, which declare believers to be free from the judgment (for ex. ch. iii. 18, v. 24) a condemnatory one.

Ver. 13. *And the sea gave the dead, that were therein, and death and hell gave the dead, that were therein; and they were judged every one according to their works.* This verse does not advance, but supplies and completes. The words, agreeing with the close of ver. 12, "and they were judged according to their works," which sounds so alarmingly for the *dead*, whose works can only be *bad*, shews that we are here again at the point, to which we had already come there. The expression of the *resurrection*, used also in the Gospel in regard to the ungodly, (comp. ver. 29,) is here studiously shunned. After the heavenly blessedness of believers had been described in ver. 6 as the *first resurrection*, the representation of salvation was closely connected with the resurrection. The elevation, too, of the prophetical stand-point, of itself admits of nothing, which has the character of semblance merely, or is but half. And according to the style of the Revelation the righteous partake of a *double* resurrection, but the wicked of *none at all.* This emphatic use of the resurrection, by which it is represented as the privilege of believers, is found also in the Gospel (comp. ch. vi. 39, 40, 44, 54), and occurs even in Luke, ch. xiv. 14, xx. 35. The *sea* is here, as commonly in the Apocalypse, the sea of the *peoples*, the wicked restless world. The dead, whom the sea conceals, are those who were slain in the bloody conflict of selfishnesss against selfishness, in which they killed one another in the Cainite spirit of brotherly hatred—not Cain against Abel, but Cain against Cain, (ch. vi. 4.) The dead in the sea are related to those of *death* and *hell*, as in ver. 4, those, who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, to those who had not worshipped the beast. *They* also belong to death and hell, but in these there are great numbers besides, who in the way of nature have died without salvation. The sea in the literal sense does not suit here. For, the number of dead persons concealed by this, is extremely small, as compared with the rest, and the mention of it would possess a sentimental aspect entirely foreign to the character of the Apocalypse. From the juxtaposition with death and hell the sea can here be

referred to only as the receptacle of the lost dead. But the natural sea engulphs alike the righteous and the wicked. That the sea stands here in the figurative sense, appears also from ch. xxi. 1, according to which the sea cannot belong to the original constitution of things in nature, but must be a product of sin. That the symbol of the sea comes out with such unusual prominence in the Apocalypse, admits of explanation from the circumstance, that being in the island of Patmos, John was constantly within sight of the sea. *Death* is here not natural death merely, but what alone deserves the name, an *unblessed* death, the legitimate continuation, and, at the same time, the punishment of *spiritual* death. This is shewn by the connection of death with hell, which is found also in ch. i. 18, and vi. 8; and by ver. 14, which is inexplicable, if we understand by death what is commonly understood and expressed by that in the world.—Hell, Hades, is everywhere in the New Testament the place of torment for the ungodly (comp. on ch. i. 18, vi. 8.)

Ver. 14. *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.*[1] Death can only mean here the death of perdition. For such only can be cast into the lake of fire. The idea is this, that in place of *provisional*, there now enters *final*, perdition. For believers, according to the mode of representation in John, there is no death. What is commonly called such, is in his view but the transition to a state of heavenly bliss, which begins the moment one passes out of this life, and which is one day to be succeeded by a participation in the marriage feast of the Lamb. Here all is but a *life of vanity*.[2] But so long as this death reigns over unbelievers, and has not given way to the second death, believers must also be subject to death in its common acceptation. To the second death for the wicked corresponds for the righteous the second (blessed) resurrection.—In regard to the

[1] The *lake of fire* is wanting in the text followed by Luther.

[2] How one must be tormented and tossed about, if death is here understood in the common acceptation, may be seen from the words of Vitringa: Sensus est, mortem temporalem, quae hactenus imperium in homines exercuerat, plane esse abolendam et reproborum respectu convertendam in mortem aeternam. So also the remark of Wolf: Quae non amplius locum sit habitura in homines, quandoquidem alii eorum, nempe quorum nomina in libro vitae consignata fuerint, vitae aeternae, alii vero morti secundae sive aeternae sint vindicandi.

second death, comp. on ch. ii. 11, xx. 6. Berleb. Bible, "The first death is nothing else but the miserable and painful state of man, lying under the dominion of sin and so under the wrath of God as to body and soul; and that state as preliminary to the other death. This first death has, as it were, two lands, over which its dominion stretches: 1. One in time, before the separation of soul and body, Luke xv. 32; 1 John iii. 14. For, those who allow sin to reign over them in this life, are also even here subject to the power of death. 2. When such persons depart out of this life, they must still remain in death; they go into the common receptacle of departed, impure souls. But the *other* death is that state which follows the first, altogether wretched and undone, into which they fall, who have not been softened by the judgment of the first death; since they are cut off through a frightfully long and dark eternity from all the grace and mercy of God, and remain like impure dogs excluded from the land and light of the living."—In regard to the *lake of fire*, see on ch. xix. 20, xx. 10. The *oven* of fire, in Matt. xiii. 42, 50, corresponds.

Ver. 15. *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.* Bengel remarks that "with great emphasis the discourse in ver. 14 and 15 is thrice closed with the words, the lake of fire." In ver. 14 the final hell is, as it were, erected, here it receives its wretched inhabitants. There is a parallel in John xv. 6, "He that abides not in me, is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." "O Jesus, help now, for the sake of thy wounds, that I may be found written in the book of life!"

THE SEVENTH GROUP, THE NEW JERUSALEM.

(Ch. xxi. 1—22, 5.)

The sixth group, in ch. xvii.—xx. represented the judgment upon the three enemies of God, of the Lamb, and the church. It closes with the completion of their overthrow in the destruction of the chief enemy, Satan; with the last judgment on their servants, and the removal of all that has pressed in upon the creation through sin. Everything is now prepared for the

entrance of the *last* phase of the kingdom of God, for the foundation of the new earth, on which righteousness dwells, for the erection on it of the kingdom of glory, for the solemnization of the marriage of the Lamb, to the threshold of which we were brought by the song of praise in ch. xix. 6—8, that anticipated the contents of ch. xix. 11—xx. 15. This sacred closing history is the subject of the present group. A church, which has such hope, can never faint under the tribulations, which it may have to endure for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. She beholds the end and is comforted. She rejoices in her Lord, who reserves the good wine till the last. That the hope may become truly living, the object of it is vividly delineated by John to the church, and set, as it were, before her eyes. A body is prepared for it by him, that she might take up more successfully the conflict with the visible, which is apt to induce despair, as was done in former times by the prophets of the Old Testament, or rather by the Holy Spirit, who spake through them, that the minds of believers might have the glory of the future exhibited to their view in such vividness of colouring, as would be sufficient to free them from care, anxiety, and grief. So, for example, Ezekiel in ch. xl.—xlviii., and Isaiah in ch. lx. There is an unmistakeable reference to these Old Testament representations in the description given here of the new Jerusalem. By this reference, it is intimated, that we must seek only for the beginning of their fulfilment in the first appearance of Christ, and that Christian hope is still always justified in repairing to them for strength and refreshment.

Ch. xxi. 1—8. John sees the new heaven and the new earth, ver. 1; then he sees the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven, ver. 2. Thereupon he hears a double voice, one that of the just made perfect, the citizens of the new Jerusalem, who informed him, and through him the church, what is implied in this, and what blessed hope it presents, ver. 3, 4. The other voice, that of him who sits on the throne, first announces that he is going to make all things new, and then, after a testimony given respecting his supreme majesty and absolute credibility, issues the declaration that invincible faithfulness alone can attain to a participation in the benefits of the new world, while the lake of fire is appointed as the doom of apostacy.

That this section has the character of an introduction, and a prelude, is rendered quite manifest from ver. 10, where the prophet still, as in ver. 2, sees Jerusalem coming down from heaven, whereas, if we had a continued representation before us, he would have seen it as already come down. With ver. 9, begins the chief burden of the group, in which what had been briefly indicated in ver. 2, is more largely unfolded, proceeding from a similar starting-point.

The introduction first shortly represents the chief matters, with which the group is occupied; then it refers to the practical point of view, out of which these are to be considered, "That we may run with patience the race that is set before us." "I am content that I have seen the city; and without weariness will I go nearer to it, not all my life-long will I suffer its bright golden streets to disappear from my sight." If the old Jerusalem, the militant church, is heavily tried; if severe afflictions befal her citizens; if every thing seems to invoke despair and renunciation, as was the case at the time when the Revelation was seen, there are no more effectual means for us of consolation and support, than to direct our eye continually on the new Jerusalem, and the wells of living water, which are there opened for the thirsty.

Ver. 1. *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For, the first heaven and the first earth were passed away,*[1] *and the sea is no more.* The new heaven and the new earth is first mentioned by Isaiah in ch. lxv. 17, "For, behold, I create a new heaven and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor will it come into mind"—a passage, to which ch. lxvi. 22 refers, and of which we may regard what is said respecting the earth in ch. xi., as but the expansion. The fundamental passage in the New Testament is 2 Pet. iii. 13, "But we, according to his promise (in Isa. lxv. 17, lxvi. 22) look for a new heaven and

1 The reading ἀπῆλθον or ἀπῆλθαν, for παρῆλθεν has probably been derived from ver. 4. *Passing by* in the sense of vanishing, is an Old Testament expression (עבר), which in the Apocalypse has the advantage of originality on its side. It is found also in 1 John ii. 8 and ver. 17, "and the world passes away (παράγεται) and the lust thereof." This latter passage, with which also 1 Cor. vii. 31 is to be compared, perfectly accords also in meaning. From all analogies it may be presumed, that John alludes to the word of our Lord in Matth. xxiv. 35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, (παρελεύσεται)," as Peter does also in 2 Pet. iii. 10, rather than that the copyists had introduced the reference to that passage.

a new earth, in which righteousness dwells." In substance the *regeneration* corresponds, or the renewing of the world in Matth. xix. 28. There is a presupposition of the new heaven and the new earth in the renewing, of which the apostle speaks in 2 Cor. v. 17, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all is become new." As the corruption began with persons, and then passed over to the other parts of creation, the renewing also must proceed in the same way. In the germ, therefore, there is to be seen the new heaven and the new earth in the first appearance of Christ, and the new powers of life brought into operation in him and conferred on the human race. The commission of his militant church for centuries has been to rear occupants for the new earth, citizens for the new Jerusalem.—The announcement of the new heaven and the new earth joins on immediately to ch. xx. 11, where the destruction of the present heaven and the present earth was predicted; a connection to which the words, "for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away," expressly points. In regard to the desolations which sin has effected on the old earth and heavens, comp. what was said on the passage referred to. Only these desolations vanish, the kernel remains. Berleb. Bible: "Nature will not be annihilated, but purified; all corruption shall be abolished; the work of God himself remains, and is merely set free from its dross. It will be such a change as may fitly enough be called a destruction of what previously existed. For the change shall not be a small, but an entire one." That the subject of discourse should be simply, without any further explanation, a new heaven and a new earth, shews quite plainly how deeply the effects of sin have been imprinted on the heavens and the earth.—De Wette thinks, that "a limitation of the renewal is to be found in the circumstance, that the fiery lake of hell belonging to the old world still continues." Züllig, however, remarks on the other hand, "that this is not a mark of incompleteness, but an eternal testimony to the divine righteousness, and for the friends of God a thought fitted to quicken their sense of deliverance and of the happier condition appointed to them." *Evil, in its state of absolute restraint, is no longer a witness against the better world.* All the complaints of the righteous regarding the state of matters on the old earth, proceed not on the existence alone of evil, but

on the freedom, with which it is allowed to operate. The final hell, the lake of fire, which belongs not at all to the old, but only to the new world, serves not less for the glorification of God, than the new Jerusalem. The damned *weep* the praise of God, as the elect *sing* his praise.—Vitringa and others would understand by the new heaven and the new earth "a renewal of the state of the church," a completion of the Reformation. Against this view, however, which greatly weakens and evacuates the meaning of the words, ch. xx. 11 is alone quite decisive. Bengel: "The former heaven and the former earth has passed away in flight at the last day from the presence of him, who sat upon the throne, ch. xx. 11. And just as in ch. xx. 15 it was unfolded, where those shall go, who were not found written in the book of life, so it is now related, where those are to be sent, who are written in that book, ver. 27."—The *sea* is the sea of the *peoples*, the wicked restless world—comp. at ch. xx. 13. That passage throws light on the one before us. According to it, along with the sea, there also vanishes from the creation the Cainite spirit of brotherly hatred, which led men to kill one another (comp. ch. vi. 4.) By it sea and death are inseparably connected with each other. There is no longer any sea, after every one who is not written in the book of life, has been cast into the lake of fire (ch. xx. 15.) The sea disappears along with the wicked (Isa. lvii. 20.) The vanishing of the merely natural sea, which is not referred to in any other part of Scripture, would not be in its proper place here, even if it were actually to happen. The natural sea belongs, according to Gen., i. to creation in its original state, whereas here that alone is removed from heaven and earth, which was the effect of sin. It is the sea that most of all occupies a prominent place in the praises found in the Old Testament respecting the Creator's greatness,—comp. for example Ps. civ. 25, 26.

Ver. 2. *And the holy city,*[1] *the new Jerusalem, I saw come down out of heaven, from God,*[2] *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* First the new heaven and the new earth is mentioned,

1 Luther (And I John saw) follows the not sufficiently supported reading: καὶ ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης εἶδον, which has come from ch. xxii. 8, and against which Bengel remarks: Textus ipse coelum novum, terram novam, Jerusalem novam arctissime connectit.

2 Luther has, from God out of heaven. The reading here, ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ is a consequence of the false reading in ch. xx. 9.

then the new Jerusalem. Farther, the new heaven and the new earth already stand before the internal eye, while the new Jerusalem first comes down before the eyes of the Seer. By the two it is indicated, that the former is the condition of the latter. Hence they are guilty of folly, who expect on the old earth a triumphant and glorious church. The *holy city*—so is the church of the future world named here and in ch. xxii. 19, because she shines forth in the splendour of her virtues (comp. on ch. xix. 8) and of the glory lent her by God (comp. on the subject of the glory at ch. iv. 8.) This predicate was applied even to the old Jerusalem, the church in her militant state (comp. ch. xi. 2); but it belongs to the new in so surpassing, transcendent a sense, that it is called simpliciter the holy city. In Isa. lii. 1, Jerusalem is called the holy city in the sense of the august and glorious, and in regard to its glorified state after the appearance of salvation.—The *new Jerusalem.* A *threefold* Jerusalem is peculiar to the New Testament. First, the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebr. xii. 22, comp. xi. 10, 16, xiii. 14), or the Jerusalem that is above, (Gal. iv. 26,) the heavenly community of the righteous. Then a Jerusalem here below, in the present life, the church in her militant state. Finally, the new Jerusalem on the glorified earth, with the introduction of which the two others vanish, which has in common with the first its heavenly character, and with the second a dwelling on the earth. Berleb. Bible, "The Jerusalem above comes down to that which is below; but that here below has become quite changed." In the Revelation, the heavenly Zion is mentioned with its 144,000 of perfectly righteous (ch. xiv. 1—5); the militant church is indirectly denoted as Jerusalem (comp. on ch. xi. 2); the holy city (ch. xx. 9); the beloved city; but John has reserved the name Jerusalem for the *new* Jerusalem, of which it is used, besides here, in ver. 10, and in ch. iii. 12. It never once denotes the militant church, much less that lifeless corpse, the literal Jerusalem.[1]—The *new* Jerusalem, as distinguished from "the beloved city" in ch. xx. 9, which is on all sides warred against

[1] It goes hand in hand with this, that John in the Gospel never calls the literal Jerusalem Ἱερουσαλήμ, the original, Old Testament, sacred form, but always Ἱεροσόλυμα, the heathenish, Grecianised form, made as it were by art (comp. ch. i. 19, ii. 13, iv. 45, v. 1, 2.) Bengel: "It is not without a reason that John in his Gospel always writes ἱεροσόλυμα, when referring to the ancient city; in the Apocalypse always Ἱερουσαλήμ, of the heavenly city; the latter is the Hebrew term, original and more sacred;

and beleaguered—the militant church. That the new Jerusalem, which is as much as the glorified Jerusalem, forms the contrast to this, not to the literal Jerusalem, is evident from this simple consideration, that the latter is never mentioned in the Apocalypse, while the militant church is indirectly represented as Jerusalem in the passages already referred to. Add to this, that the new Jerusalem is mentioned for the consolation of those who groaned under the oppression of the sufferings that befel the militant church, and not because of the loss of the literal Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem, besides, is always mentioned in connection with the coming down. Never is the heavenly Jerusalem as such designated by the name of the new Jerusalem. It is the new Jerusalem only in so far as it comes in place of the old. All is not new in heaven. The new Jerusalem *comes down out of heaven from God.* That the city comes actually down to the earth, that it is not merely inclined toward it, in order to be more distinctly perceived by the Seer (as has been supposed in a false view of such passages as John xiv. 2, where the many mansions in the house of the Father are only the provisional abodes of safety for believers[1]), appears from ver. 10 and the connection with the new earth, and specially the vanishing of the sea in ver. 1.—The new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven in a double respect. First, in so far as till then the great number of its citizens, the just made perfect, had been preserved in heaven for their future inheritance upon earth. In this respect the coming down from heaven here corresponds to the ascending up to heaven in ch. xi. 12 (comp. in regard to the double stage of blessedness in the Apocalypse, the first the heavenly, the second the earthly, at ch. xx. 5.) The descending of the new Jerusalem from heaven upon earth forms the counterpart to the removal of the ungodly out of the provisional state of misery into the final, to their being cast into the lake of fire, ch. xx. 13—15. Then again it does so, in so far as the church of the future has its origin in God, who makes

the other, at that time common, Grecian, more polished. Paul makes the same distinction when refuting the Judaizers in Gal. iv. 26, comp. with i. 17, ii. 1, Hebr. xii. 22, although elsewhere he speaks promiscuously, and as a mark of respect and favour uses *ἱεροσαλήμ* when writing to the Romans and Corinthians."

1 Also what is said in Phil. iii. 20, *ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει* is, according to the same verse and ver. 21, only of temporary force. For with the change of the mortal body into the body of glory the kingdom of God comes down from heaven to the earth.

all things new, ver. 5. There is an intentional correspondence with ch. xx. 9, "and fire came down from heaven and consumed them." That coming down out of heaven from God prepares the way for this, and is its essential pre-requisite.—Bengel: "It comes down from God, and still his throne is in the city, and he himself is with men therein, ver. 3, ch. xxii. 3."—The preparation refers partly to the glorious virtues with which she is adorned, and in whose lustre she shines forth (comp. on ch. xix. 7, 8), partly to the glorious distinctions with which she is furnished by God, as they are more fully and particularly unfolded in ver. 9, sq. The "prepared," etc., corresponds to the *holy* at the beginning. In Isa. lxi. 10 the church says in the day of salvation, "I rejoice in the Lord, and my soul is joyful in my God. For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, and with the robe of righteousness covered me, as a bridegroom adorned with priestly ornament, and as a bride, who bedecks herself with jewels." There the glory of the future state is already compared to the ornamented apparel of a wedding-season.—According to ch. xxii. 5, "And they shall reign for ever," there can be no doubt that this form of the church is the last. We are led also to infer the same from the glory of the description, which excludes all further advance.[1]

Ver. 3. *And I heard a great voice from heaven, which said: Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them as their God.* Instead of: from heaven, Luther has: from the throne. The external testimonies for the two readings are pretty nearly equal. But this reading ought to be rejected on internal grounds. The voice from the throne could only be the voice of God. But God is spoken of in the third person, otherwise than in ver. 5 and Lev. xxvi. 11, 12. Since the voice from heaven cannot be an indefinite one, the more exact determination of it is to be derived from ver. 2. It must proceed from amongst the citizens of the new Jerusalem, who are coming down from heaven: "And I heard a great voice from heaven." We might, then, think of some particular one of the

1 Bengel: "It is not the new city of the millennium, but one perfectly new and eternal, as is shewn by the series of visions, the magnificence of the description, and the contrast in regard to the second death, ch. xx. 11, 12; xxi. 1, 2, 5, 8, 9; xxii. 5."

perfectly righteous, or more specially of one of the elders (comp. on ch. xiv. 13, vii. 13, 14.) But it is best to derive the precise limitation from ch. xix. 1, where the great voice is described to be that of a multitudinous host in heaven. That the great voice belongs to the entire multitude of the just made perfect, is also confirmed by the analogy of ch. xi. 15, xii. 10, xiv. 2, xv. 2—4, xix. 1, 6.—Instead of, Behold *the* tabernacle of God is with men, Luther has improperly *a* tabernacle. We are not to explain: Behold this new Jerusalem is the tabernacle; for a city cannot properly be called a tabernacle; but the tabernacle is the kernel and centre of the city (comp. the expression in ver. 11, "which had the glory of God.") Therefore: behold, *here* it is. Instead of the whole, here only the most excellent part is taken into account. The gracious presence of God among his people had in ancient times manifested itself in the symbolical form of a tabernacle, or of a tent, in which he dwelt in the midst of his people. What is there used as a symbol occurs here as an image (Mark: Dei mansio gratiosa et gloriosa, qualis olim erat tabernaculum.) For, that an external sanctuary cannot here be spoken of is evident from ver. 22. Ver. 11 corresponds as to substance, where it is noted as the most distinguished feature of the new Jerusalem, that it has the glory of God, that God is present there in the fulness of his glory.—There is nothing *absolutely new* that is promised here: if it had no foundation in the past, it could have no reality. But even in Ex. xxix. 45 it is said, "And I dwell in the midst of the children of Israel, and shall be their God;" and in Lev. xxvi. 11, 12, "And I give my dwelling in your midst, and my soul shall not reject you. And I walk in your midst, and shall be your God, and ye shall be my people." And when Ezekiel, in ch. xxxvii. 27, 28, promises, "And my dwelling shall be over you, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and the heathen shall know that I the Lord sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary in your midst is perpetual," he certainly did not mean thereby the new Jerusalem merely of the Revelation; a prelude of the fulfilment is to be sought in the manifestations of divine grace, which were given at the return from the captivity, and still more in the personal appearance of Christ (comp. John i. 14.) The word: Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, according to ch. vii. 15, has been already verified for believers in

the heavenly glory; nay, according to ch. xii. 12, xiii. 6, believers even now dwell with God in his heavenly tent, though they are still in the militant church. How could it well be otherwise, since he who has the fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in him, has promised to be with them always to the end of the world. But in the new Jerusalem the presence of God among his people shews itself in so glorious a manner, that all earlier manifestations shall thereby be thrown into the shade. Bengel: "God had formerly a dwelling with the people of Israel, when Moses erected the tabernacle, and afterwards when Solomon built the temple. But as if neither the one nor the other had existed, it is said here as of a matter altogether new, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men; because God will there manifest himself in a much more intimate, gracious, and peculiar manner." — There is a reference in the expression of God's dwelling among them to John i. 14, where it is said of the Word, "he dwelt among us." This latter is the sure foundation of the former.—On the following part of the verse Bengel remarks: "It was anciently the sum of God's covenant with his people: I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and that covenant will attain to its highest fulfilment." In place of: God himself—no other than he, the supreme Jehovah—will be your God, as we might expect from the fundamental passages of the books of Moses, it is said: he will be with them, or among them as their God, introducing a slight allusion to the name Immanuel in Isa. vii. 14, comp. Matt. i. 23. Berleb. Bible: "Then, after so many things Christ's name Immanuel will find its full realization."

Ver. 4. *And he will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the first things are passed away.* The words, "he will wipe away all tears from their eyes," have already occurred in ch. vii. 17. There it referred to the heavenly section of the church. Now at length the flow of her tears is completely and for ever stayed.—After the tears *death* is mentioned, as that which in this vale of tears calls forth the bitterest weeping. As it had come into the world through sin (Gen. ii. 17; Rom. v. 12), it must again cease through the complete victory over sin (1 Cor. xv. 54.)—As tears precede death (that they stand connected with it, appears from the

fundamental passage Isa. xxv. 8, where the destruction of death precedes, and the ceasing of death follows), so it is again succeeded by *mourning*, which is also connected with death in ch. xviii. 8. —The *crying* is not that of persons fighting, but of those oppressed, overpowered, despairing, Isa. lxv. 19.—On the expression "no more," Bengel says, "therefore till now it had not wholly ceased." *A memorial for those who would ascribe more to the thousand years' reign, than what may be found in the period already past!* It belongs to the first department of things, which through manifold stages still remains the same in all that is essential; respecting which in every stage it may still be said, "This world is aye a vale of tears, Full of pain, distress, and tears," and "Poor worms we are upon the earth, Struggling with guilt and woe and death."

Ver. 5. *And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And he says:*[1] *Write, for these words are certain and true.* He that sat upon the throne, is God in the undistinguished unity of his being (comp. on ch. xx. 11.) On the words: "Behold I make all things new," Bengel remarks, "This renewal comprises much more in it than that which is described in 2 Cor. v. 7, though this also is glorious, and indeed is the ground of that." Berleb. Bible, "This is a great word, which should lead us to nurse our strength, that we may become fresh and vigorous, and may not sell our birthright, like Esau, committing fornication with the world, and seeking all good there."—*And he says*, etc. The change of tense—he *says* between the double *said*—and the similarity of the matter to ch. xix. 9 (in both passages, the command to write, and the assurance of truth and credibility) shew, that here, as well as there, the angel is the speaker.—In regard to the call to *write*, which points to the high importance of the word spoken, see at ch. xiv. 13.—The declaration, "Behold I make all things new," is indeed a great word, and hard to be believed. Where really *all* must be made new, there it will be difficult for the natural mind to understand, how a change should take place, especially difficult for one on whom the old order of things lies with an oppressive load like a huge mountain, as was the case with the church at the time, when

1 The *to me*, which Luther adds, ought to be deleted, according to the best authorities.

John saw the Revelation. Therefore, the angel adds to the call to write the reason, *for these words are certain and true.* What is not so, does not deserve to be written, however fine it may sound. The *ground* of confidence here lies in the fact, that these are the words of God, (comp. ch. xix. 9.) The angel cannot by his authority lend support to the words of God; he can only point to the circumstance, that as God's words they deserve the fullest confidence, since he is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent, whose authority alone is sufficient to render the most incredible things true and worthy of confidence.[1]

Ver. 6. *And he said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.* After the interruption by the angel the discourse is again resumed of him, who sits on the throne. He said *to me.* What was said by him that sat on the throne in ver. 5, was also spoken for John. The express addition of the *to me* here is explained by the hortatory character of the termination of the discourse in ver. 7, 8. In John the church is addressed.—Bengel: "Twice it is said in this book, It is done. First at the completion of the wrath of God in ch. xvi. 17, and here again at the making of all things new." The more exact import is here, as in ch. xvi. 17, furnished by the connection, which shows that the subject here discussed has respect to the world's regeneration, according to which nothing more remains to be wished for by believers, and which is the completion of the whole work of God. What as to the reality was still future is spoken of as already done in respect to the vision, which addresses itself to the spiritual eye, and in which the future appears as immediately present. The new heaven and the new earth are spoken of as already come at ver. 1, and in ver. 2, Jerusalem is seen coming down. The Alpha and the Omega indicate, that in the beginning God made the heaven and

1 Bengel expounds differently: "Write, was said to John in respect to what follows, namely, these words are certain and true." Comp. the ὅτι recitativum in ch. iii. 17. But the call to write in the Revelation elsewhere has respect to the revealed truths themselves; (comp. ch. i. 11, 19, xiv. 13, x. 4), and does not occur in respect to asseverations of truthfulness. Accordingly, we must expound, Write what thou hearest (comp. the, Write what thou seest in ch. i. 11), or, Write the words, Behold I make all things new.

the earth, as in ch. xiv. 7, also, reference is made to the creation. The *Omega* and the *end* are to be accented, as being what is chiefly respected here, (comp. at ch. i. 8.) Not merely *so as*, but also *because* God is the Alpha and the beginning, he is also the Omega and the end; and that he really is so, is made manifest by this corresponding renewal of creation. It is done (it was so), was the word uttered in the beginning after every creative act; and the same, It is done, is repeated now at the end, in regard to the work of renewal. During the intermediate space it often appears, as if God's purpose were frustrated, as if he had departed from it. But the end reverts to the beginning. And this being the case, the servants of God must not faint. The middle should not vex those, who are sure in respect to the end. God is himself called the beginning and the end, because, as the beginning, so also the end yields him unconditional obedience, his decrees are assuredly carried into effect, on all the seal of his nature is impressed, all bears witness to his glory. There is a corresponding passage in 1 Cor. xv. 28, where, with like meaning, it is said, God will at last be all in all. Vitringa gives the meaning wrong, thus: God will in the end gloriously fulfil the promises which he gave to his church at the beginning. In that case, God himself could not be called the beginning and the end. The words, "I will give to him that is athirst," etc., find their explanation in what has been remarked on ch. vii. 17, comp. also xxii. 17. The thirsting are those who are in need of salvation; the *water of life* denotes *salvation*. The *freely*, without his own doing and labouring, is from Isa. lv. 1, where it is said, in reference to the Messiah's salvation, the final accomplishment of which is brought in here, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Jesus himself alludes to that passage of Isaiah in the Gospel of John, ch. vii. 37, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink," a declaration which, as already remarked by Vitringa, shall find its most glorious fulfilment at the time here referred to. All that is here said to ennoble the period, when God makes all things new, is at the same time *an evidence of poverty in respect to the thousand years' reign, which belongs to the old world.* In it still the thirsty

did not drink to satisfaction from the fountain of the water of life. Sadness and longing continue even in it to be the inseparable accompaniments of the state of believers.

Ver. 7. *He that overcomes shall inherit these things* (Luther, all things); *and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.* The practical aim of this whole group, of the representation of the "regeneration," and of the new Jerusalem, quite plainly meets us in this verse. It is this, to impart strength to the church groaning under the cross, so that from regard to the coming glory she may stand fast amid temptations. The quintessence is contained in Rom. viii. 18, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us." Strong emphasis is to be laid on the *he that overcomes* (comp. at ch. ii. 7.) Victory must be wrung from all opponents, who are many. The contrast to the persons overcoming is formed by all who are mentioned in ver. 8. But that at the time of the Seer the chief enemy that then plied hardest against Christianity was fear for the persecuting world, appears from this consideration, that there the *fearful* are the first to be named. The fundamental passage is Matt. xix. 29, "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, etc., for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Every one that overcomes shall inherit *the whole* of the promise. Berleb. Bible, "When people go to take a walk together, each one has the whole sun for his enjoyment; one cannot say, I have this here, and thou hast that other there."—The fundamental passage for what follows is 2 Sam. vii. 14, "I shall be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a son." The words in ver. 15, "My favour will I not take from him," serve as an explanation (see the remarks on the sonship of God, at Ps ii. 7.) In place of Father there, God is put here; comp. 2 Sam. vii. 24, "And thou, Lord, art God to them."

Ver. 8. *But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake, that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10 is to be compared. The characters named form four pairs—the four, the signature of the earth, to which belong these different tendencies of those, who live in the world (Col. ii. 20.)—The series

commences with the *fearful*, the faint-hearted, who shrunk from the danger and the cross, which is sure to meet those, who abide in the truth and remain stedfast to Christ. We are thus given to understand, that we have nothing to be so much afraid of as *fear* —comp. the Old Testament warning given respecting it in Deut. xx. 1—8, "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them; for the Lord thy God is with thee, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt," &c. Allusion, it would seem, is made to Matth. viii. 26, where our Lord said to the disciples, who called upon him to save them, as the ship was covered with the waves, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" comp. Mark iv. 40, "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have not faith?" The word δειλός occurs only in these three passages. We may the more readily suppose an allusion, as there also the *fearful* stands connected with a little faith or none; and also because that earlier occurrence has manifestly a symbolical meaning. The word of our Lord on the occasion itself points back to Deut. xx., comp. John xiv. 27.—With fearfulness *unbelief* is united into a pair, as its inseparable companion. Where there is no faith there is no courage, for the foundation of courage is confidence in God's help; and where no courage is, there is no faith; for faith must necessarily manifest itself in a spirit of invincible strength. Bengel: "Unbelievers are not precisely (rather, not alone) those, who have heard or understood nothing whatever of the Gospel; but also such as have not proved faithful unto death, and in their hearts have apostatised from the living God. Commonly it is not considered, that timidity has so much evil in it, if there be but a good inclination, as they say; yet here the fearful, who allow their courage to sink, and the unbelieving, are declared to be characters that the Lord has no pleasure in." The transition from the first class to the second is not so abrupt, as might at first sight appear. When the light of faith is extinguished, a frightful darkness arises, in which all sins have their being. Berleb. Bible, "People, who withdraw from the conflict, are capable of becoming abominable characters, murderers, whoremongers," etc. The *abominable* are those, who give themselves to actions of an abominable kind, comp. at ch. xvii. 4, 5. *Murder* is a particular species of abominable conduct. Murderers stand

related to the abominable much as idolaters do to liars. Several understand by the abominable those who abuse themselves with mankind, referring to Lev. xviii. 22, where the practices of such persons are expressly called abominations. But the notion of what is abominable is of a much more comprehensive nature in the law, (comp. Lev. xviii. 26, 27), and if this crime were meant, it would certainly have been more specifically described. Besides, according to 1 John iii. 15, brotherly hatred even is of the same nature with murder, as being this in its germ and root.—*Whoremongers* and *sorcerers* have this in common, that their attempts on the well-being of a neighbour, unlike those of the murderer, are made covertly. Sorcery appears also in ch. ix. 21, as the means of hurting one's neighbour thus, and especially in regard to his life (comp. also ch. xviii. 23.) Fornication is in the law presented under the aspect of injury done to a neighbour, and so also here in ch. ix. 21.—In the last pair the idolaters are the species, liars the genus: *and* generally *all liars.* Idolaters are liars, since they change God's truth into a lie, and have given glory and worship to the creature along with the Creator, who is blessed for ever (Rom. i. 25; and on the idea of a lie, see on ch. xiv. 5.) In respect to the idolaters it is indifferent, whether they worship what are more commonly called idols, or mammon and their belly (Eph. v. 5; Col. iii. 5; Phil. iii. 19.)

Ch. xxi. 9—xxii. 1—5. After the introduction we have now the main theme of the group, *the lengthened description of the new Jerusalem.* The consolation for weary pilgrims will be the more complete, the more vividly it is pourtrayed before their eyes. After St John had, in ver. 9, 10, been transferred to the immediate neighbourhood of the new Jerusalem, he begins his description, in ver. 11, with its highest ornament, *the glory of God,* which illuminates it. On this follows its greatness and lofty walls, its twelve gates, and the twelve foundations of the gates, in ver. 12—14. In ver. 15—17, he gives us the measurement of the city and of the walls. In ver. 18—21 the grandeur and glory of the city, as appearing in its *material,* in the walls, in the buildings, in the foundations of the walls, in the gates, and finally in the streets. In ver. 22—27 we have an account of the glory of the city in regard to its *inhabitants;* first of all, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, ver. 22—23; then,

coming down to the human inhabitants, the elect portion of the heathen world with its kings, ver. 24—26; finally, in ver. 27, the negative element, the exclusion of all those, whose presence would darken its bright splendour. In ch. xxii. 1—5, the Seer unfolds the blessedness of the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem, and the glorious privileges they enjoy—the water of life, and the tree of life, their glorious and never interrupted fellowship with the Lord, their reigning for ever and ever.

Ver. 9. *And there came one of the seven angels, who have the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and spake with me and said, Come, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.* The reason why the function of shewing should be given to one of the angels, who had the seven vials, may be seen at ch. xvii. 1. —The prefixed epithet, "the bride," serves to determine more exactly what follows, "the Lamb's wife;" it shews, that we are to understand thereby the *betrothed* (comp. at ch. xix. 7.) That the bride of the Lamb is here spoken of (in allusion to the Song, comp. ch. iii. 20[1]), shews that the glory of the church is here beheld in its *becoming* and *beginning;* and corresponds to the circumstance of the prophet seeing, in ver. 10, as in ver. 2, the new Jerusalem *coming down.* The coming down is in a manner the bridal procession.

Ver. 10. *And he brought me in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and shewed me the city,*[2] *the holy Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.* That the mountain *great and high* is destined for the site of the new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven, which was denied in their perplexity by those who would transfer the new Jerusalem to heaven (by such the mountain was considered only as a watch-tower, like the Pisgah from which Moses beheld the land of Canaan), appears first from the consideration advanced by Bengel, "In the wilderness, whither John himself had been carried, was the whore herself, therefore, also on the great and high mountain, to which he is now borne, is the city itself. Being there it stands in the view of all the nations, ver. 16, Matth. v. 14." The same thing is further manifest from the Old Testament fundamental passages. Ezekiel,

1 Vitringa: Phrasis haec est cantici Solomonis, ch. iv. 8, 9, v. 1, qua teneritudo amoris Christi erga ecclesiam depingitur.

2 Luther: The great city, according to the reading πόλιν τὴν μεγάλην.

according to ch. xl. 2, after the overthrow of the city and temple, was led in the visions of God into the land of Israel, and placed there upon a very high mountain, "whereon there was like the building of a city toward the south." He was brought there, that he might be quite near the city, and get a close view of it. In Ezek. xvii. 22, 23 also a high and lofty mountain is spoken of in respect to the future glorification of the kingdom of God: The Zion, which even in the times of the Old Testament, when viewed with the eyes of the Spirit, appeared very high (comp. Ps. xlviii. 3, 4, "Beautiful through its height, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion in the extreme north, the city of the great king," Ps. lxviii. 16), grows in the future to a measureless elevation (comp. Ez. xx. 40.) The last fundamental passage is Micah iv. 1 (comp. Isa. ii. 2), where the future surpassing glory of the church is represented under the symbol of Zion's elevation above all mountains.—The *old* Jerusalem is so little thought of in respect to the *new*, that the latter is here simply called Jerusalem.—Bengel remarks, "The angel said, he would shew John the bride; and now he shews him a city; even as before he had said, he would shew him the great whore, and shewed him the city Babylon. It is, therefore, pre-eminently the inhabitants of Babylon and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that are respectively meant." Ch. xix. 7, 8, plainly shews, that by the bride is primarily intended the church in respect to its members. In the city also the inhabitants hold the most important place. But the body, the outward state, in which the soul resides, comes also into consideration, as well as the soul itself. The bride and the city would be but imperfectly seen, if the persons alone, apart from the accompanying circumstances, were presented to view.

Ver. 11. *Which had the glory of God: her light like to the most precious stone, like a chrystal-clear jasper stone.* The description of the city begins with the most glorious element belonging to it, the presence of God. "The name of the city henceforth is: Jehovah therein"—he is present in it in the entire fulness of his glory, protection, and favour; such was the statement with which Ezekiel had concluded his whole delineation of the new temple and the new Jerusalem. What he *ended* with is here made the *beginning*. God is present—this was the noblest ornament even of the church of the Old Testament, its

most glorious privilege, its fundamental distinction from the heathen world. The rendering of this presence efficient was the highest privilege of the church of the New Testament during the present life. But in the new Jerusalem the presence of God shall manifest itself in a way hitherto unknown. Of the glory of God and Christ John speaks in the Gospel and the Apocalypse with great frequency (comp. at ch. xviii. 1.) The glory of the Lord is always only there, where the Lord himself is; *it is the Lord in his glory.* It is said here, in ver. 22, "the Lord God the Almighty is its temple;" in ch. xxii. 5, "God the Lord will shine upon them." These passages stand related to the one before us, as Isai. lx. 19, "And the Lord will be to it for an eternal light," to Isa. lx. 1, "the glory of the Lord rises over thee." In John xii. 41 it is said, "This spake Isaiah, when he saw *his glory.*" According to ch. vi. 1 Isaiah had seen *the Lord* sitting upon his throne high and lifted up. Cocceius already remarks correctly on our verse, "God was there present with all his riches, and with all splendour."—What the city had in respect to the glory of God, is denoted in the words: her light, etc. There can be no doubt that the light is not diverse from the glory of the Lord; and the meaning is, that this glory is its light. That such is the case is plain from the circumstance that the glory can only be *seen* as light; and also from ver. 23, "the glory of the Lord *enlightened* it," where John comes back upon the glory; finally from ch. iv. 3, where the Lord himself, on account of his glory, is compared to the jasper-stone. In the designation of the glory of the Lord as light, allusion is not made to the lamps of the temple, but to the great lights of heaven. This appears from the language itself, in which the word employed is the one specially appropriated to the lights of heaven,[1] and also from the manifest allusion of the parallel passage, ver. 23, to Gen. i. 14, sq. Several expositors put splendour in place of light: And her splendour, that of the new Jerusalem, was, in consequence of her illumination by the glory of the Lord, like, etc. But this explanation is against ver. 23, and the

1 Comp. Gen. i. 14 in the LXX.: *καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς, γενηθήτωσαν φωστῆρες ἐν τῷ στερεώματι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ εἰς φαῦσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*; ver. 16; Wisdom, ch. xiii. 2, *φωστῆρες οὐρανοῦ*; Sir. ch. xliii. 7, where *φωστὴρ* is used of the moon; Phil. ii. 15, where it is applied to Christians as the lights of the world, analagous to those natural lights. See also what is said of Christ in John ix. 5.

signification is arbitrarily put on the word. It never properly means splendour; in the Hellenistic and New Testament usage it always bears the sense of *light*. This latter fact is also against Bengel's supposition, according to which the word here must denote window: "The glory of God is itself the splendour, which makes the holy city light, and this splendour, which fills the city from within, shines forth through the clear window." Add to this, that the window, if it might otherwise be thought of, cannot at any rate be referred to here; that the illuminating property of the glory of the Lord is not mentioned, nor is it said that the supposed window owes its lighting property to the glory of the Lord; finally, that a city of 12,000 stadia in length and breadth cannot have a single window.[1]—With St John the *jasper* is the noblest of precious stones; as is evident from ch. iv. 3, and of this chapter vers. 18 and 19. It is possible that he had idealized it, in particular lent it the character of transparency and of bright splendour; possible, too, that afterwards the usage had changed. Dioscorides and Psellus also speak of a chrystal kind of jasper.

Ver. 12. *It had a wall great and high, it had twelve gates, and upon the gates twelve angels, and names written thereupon, which are the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.* The chief object of walls around a city is everywhere to give *security* to the city. A wall is therefore often employed in the Old Testament as an image of protection and safety—comp., for example, 1 Sam. xxv. 16; Prov. xviii. 11; Ezek. xxii. 30; Zech. ii. 5, "I will be a wall of fire to her round about," Isa. xxvi. 1. This being the one grand object of city walls, no other view of them can be brought into notice here. If any other had been contemplated, it would certainly have been indicated as one, not naturally presenting itself. The predicates great and high strengthen this view; the former referring to the length, thickness, and height, and the latter, the height, being besides specially noticed, as a point that was peculiarly prominent in them. Viewed in respect to their protecting quality, walls are of importance chiefly on

1 Quite correctly was the meaning of the verse given by Vitringa: Urbem hanc observatam Johanni magno splendore et claritate illustratam quippe cujus φωστήρ, luminare, quod Jaspidem referret, esset deus ipse, suae gloriae radiis eam illuminans.

account of their greatness and height. So that by the walls here great and high is represented *the security of the new Jerusalem against all hostile assaults*, with which the old Jerusalem, the militant church, was so sorely beset in the latter days (comp ch. xx. 9); or the idea is exhibited of the divine protection, on which the church's security rests. The old Jerusalem had wanted walls great and high—comp. Ezek. xxxviii. 11, where Gog and Magog come up against those "who dwell without walls, and have neither bars nor gates." The dangers, besides, against which the walls great and high protect, could be no real, but only *conceivable* and *possible* ones. For, no enemies any longer exist by whom the city could be assailed. These have all been cast for ever into the lake of fire. — According to ver. 17, the height of the walls is immensely less than that of the city. But the height of the walls is to be viewed in respect to their design. A wall 144 cubits high is as high as a wall generally can be from its design: any further height would be altogether superfluous.—The walls around the temple of Ezekiel, ch. xl. 5, are not to be compared. These had another design, as we learn from ch. xlii. 20, in conformity with which they were not, like these, great and high.—The walls great and high embody the promise given in Isa. liv. 14, "Thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee."—The signification of the *gates* is plain from ch. xxii. 14. They serve for an entrance to the citizens into the new Jerusalem. Bengel: "The number twelve occurs in this verse thrice, and frequently afterwards, ver. 14, 16, 21, xxii. 2."—As the employment of the angels on the gates is not distinctly stated, they could only be brought into notice here with reference to their main business, the protection of the righteous (comp. Ps. xci. 11; Matth. xviii. 10; Luke xvi. 22; Hebr. i. 14.) This is strengthened by the manifest parallelism of the angels on the gates with the walls great and high. The gates stand constantly open, according to ver. 25. Twelve points are given in them, where the protection of the walls great and high ceases, and where protection of another kind must enter, so that nothing of a hostile nature might pass into the city. The angels, accordingly, like the walls, are a symbol of the divine protection against all enemies; such namely as the fancy, filled with

terrors originating in the militant state of the church, might figure to itself: for *real* enemies are no longer to be found in the new Jerusalem.—Isa. lxii. 6 cannot be compared. For there the watchmen, whom the prophet represents as placed on the walls of Jerusalem, are not angels, but the ideal representatives of believers, with whom he associates himself in prayer for their salvation.—According to Ezek. xlviii. 31—34, the new Jerusalem has twelve gates, according to the names of the children of Israel, three on each side. The same object, which is served in Ezekiel by the correspondence between the gates and the tribes, is served here by the names of the twelve tribes on the gates of the city. It indicates, that the new Jerusalem is "a great unity having its root in God," the last form of the holy catholic church, the union of the head with all his true members; and therefore meets the narrow-mindedness which now in the militant church would single out some particular part and set it forth as the true church of Christ, reproves the envy of Ephraim against Judah, and the hatred of Judah against Ephraim (Isa. xi. 13.) That this thought should be expressed here in the particular form it bears, that the church in all its parts should be denoted by the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, who are naturally spoken of, not in a Jewish, but in an Israelitish-Christian sense, points to the venerable continuity of the church, and is a decisive proof against the modern idea of the antagonism between Judaism and Christianity. Bengel: "The names of the twelve tribes were formerly engraven on the precious stones worn on the high-priests' breast; but here the names of the apostles are upon the precious stones or foundations of the city, and the names of the twelve tribes upon the gates themselves, Ezek. xlviii. 31." The names of the twelve apostles guard against the misapprehension of the twelve tribes of Israel, and shew that these are spoken of not in the Jewish, but in the Israelitish-Christian sense. For, the apostles were Christ's ambassadors to all nations, Matth. xxviii. 19.

Ver. 13. *On the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.* The gates serve as avenues through which the chosen go into the city; comp. on ver. 12 and ver. 25, according to which they constantly stand open for this purpose. Their being directed to all the quarters of heaven, points to the oecumenical character of the new Jeru-

salem.[1] That the east should be first in order (while in Ezekiel, ch. xlviii. 31, sq., it is the north) and the west last, is to be explained by means of a reference to the word of the Lord in Matth. viii. 11, "But I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and from the west,[2] and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Also in the word in Isa. xliii. 5, 6, "I will bring thy seed from the east and gather them from the west. I will say to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back; bring my sons from far and my daughters from the ends of the earth," to which the Lord alludes, the east forms the beginning, and the north precedes the south; comp. Luke xiii. 29.

Ver. 14. *And the walls of the city had twelve foundations, and upon them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.* The relation of the foundations to the walls is made out in the most probable way with De Wette, thus: "Every twelfth part of the walls between the several gates had a foundation-stone stretching along the whole length, which was exposed to view."—The first point is, that the walls generally have *foundations*. This marks their immoveable stedfastness, according to Hebr. xi. 10, "For, he looked for a city, which has foundations." The second is, that upon the foundations stand the names of the twelve apostles. This indicates, that the twelve apostles by their immoveable stedfastness hold the foremost place, that they are the noblest bulwark of the church, the main channel through which she derives the protecting grace of God. If still in the new Jerusalem they are the foundation, upon which the security of the church rests as to all conceivable dangers, they must also be through every age of the militant church the bulwark, by which all real assaults are driven back. Berleb. Bible, "This, then, should make the apostolic word acceptable to us." It lets us know, whither we should turn ourselves, if we have not yet come to know it. This passage, and Matth. xix. 28, where the twelve apostles

1 Vitringa: Fore ut populis, qui ex omnibus terrae oris, secundum coeli climata et plagas divisis accessuri se aggregare vellent civitati huic coelesti, ubique commoda obtingat ejus adeundae occasio.

2 Properly as here: from the risings and from the settings. The fundamental passage shews, that the reading ἀνατολῶν (see on the plural at ch. xvi. 12), is here the correct form, and that ἀνατολῆς is to be rejected. In ch. xvi. 12 also an attempt has been made to supplant ἀνατολῶν.

appear as the heads of the church in the regeneration, which is all one with the new Jerusalem, alone suffice against those, who maintain that the apostleship was to be a perpetual office, and who expect the deliverance of the church by her submission to the pretended *new* apostles. The Lord himself, and the disciple whom he loved, knew only of *twelve* apostles. *The twelve apostles for ever*, this is the solution with which we meet them on the basis of these passages. The fundamental passage here is Eph. ii. 20, "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."[1] In this passage the apostles themselves are distinctly called the foundation stones of the church, proving that their names here also stand on the foundations only because on them in a quite peculiar manner rests the security and stedfastness of the church. The *prophets* being named along with the apostles, is only an apparent deviation. For, that by the prophets are meant, not those of the Old, but those of the New Testament, that they are personally identical with the apostles, is evident from the parallel passages, ch. iii. 5, iv. 11, and from the considerations formerly advanced on ch. i. 1.[2] That the apostles in Eph. ii. 20 are no other than the twelve apostles, might have been established from the passage before us, if it had not been otherwise certain. The fundamental passage in Ephesians again points back to Matth. xvi. 18.—It has been thought, that as only twelve apostles are here spoken of, Paul must have been left out, and efforts have been made to account for this omission. But that the author of the Revelation reckoned Matthias, and not Paul among the apostles, can be imagined by no one, who has perceived the relation in which the Revelation stands to St Paul—comp. at ch. i. 4, i. 5, iii. 14, xvii. 14, and many other passages, and the remarks made in vol. i. p. 42. This passage, however, itself rests on a Pauline foundation. The appointment of Matthias was indeed made according to the will of God, but it was only a *provisional* one, as is clear alone from the way in which it took place,

1 We can with the less reason deny a reference to the fundamental passages in Paul, since the figure of the foundation-stone is one of which he is particularly fond; θεμέλιος occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in his writings; θεμέλιον is found only in Luke and Paul.

2 See also Stier's investigations in his Comm. on Eph. ii. 20.

and likewise from the *external* qualifications, which, according to Acts i. 21, 22, were alone taken into account, while the *internal* conditions were uniformly held to be indispensable toward an *ultimate* appointment. It is clear, too, from the object in view, as declared in ver. 22. The more John elevates the *prophetical* side of the apostolical calling, the farther must it have been from him to regard that appointment as a final one. It stood in force only till the Lord himself should be pleased, by his own immediate choice, to fill up the vacant ground. Matthias is never mentioned again in the history. That what is here attributed to the apostles, does not trench too closely on the honour of Christ, is plain from the simple consideration, that they are designated apostles, messengers, of the Lamb — so Christ is here called on account of the atonement by blood, through which he founded his church (ch. xix. 7.) In this way the honour, which is bestowed on them, reverts unconditionally to him; precisely as in Matt. xvi. 18 the word addressed to Peter as the representative of the apostles, "on this rock will I build my church," was said on the ground of his confession to Christ as the Son of the living God; and as Paul, in Eph. ii. 20, still expressly points to Christ as the proper corner-stone.—Ewald maintains, that every one who is not destitute of all sense of what is proper and becoming, must admit, that the contents of this verse do not consist with "apostolical discretion," and hence that the Apocalypse could not be written by the apostle John. But this objection is sufficiently disposed of by the reference alone to the fundamental passage in the epistle to the Ephesians, and it is not worth while to adduce any farther proof of the point, that the apostles everywhere discover themselves to have been deeply penetrated by a consciousness of the dignity of their office, and that in the Gospel of John also they appear as the spiritual foundation of the whole Christian community (ch. xvii.) Such adverse judgments could only be arrived at by men transferring their own doubts regarding the truly divine mission of the apostles to these apostles themselves.

Ver. 15. *And he that spake with me had as a measure a golden reed, that he might measure the city, and its gates and its walls.* Bengel: "The angel continues to show the city by measuring it." Allusion is made to the angel with the measur-

ing-rod in his hand, in Ezek. xl. 3. The reed is of gold on account of the glory of what was to be measured. The measure of the gates is not expressly given afterwards. They must be understood to be of the same height with the walls.

Ver. 16. *And the city lies foursquare, and its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand stadia. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.* The purpose to measure the city forms the kernel of this verse, according to the connection with the preceding verse: there, that he might measure; here, he measured. But it is first announced, that the city is foursquare, and that its length is as great as its breadth. Bengel: "This is not mentioned in vain, for it might have been foursquare (four-cornered), and yet have been more in length than in breadth." Being a complete square, the whole circuit was ascertained, whenever one side was measured. But because the height also was of importance, it is added, that the dimensions here were equal to those already given concerning the length and breadth.—A square of a similar kind is formed also by the new city of Ezekiel, ch. xlviii. 16, 20. The square was regarded among the ancients as the symbol of the *complete*, the *perfect*.[1] It has respect also to the oecumenical character of the new Jerusalem, indicating that an equal right to it was presented to all the four quarters of the earth.—The length of each side was 12,000 stadia: the twelve, the signature of the church, here multiplied by a thousand, in ver. 17 by itself (see at ch. vii. 4.) As the immense extent of the new Jerusalem—300 geographical miles—points to the vast multitude of members belonging to the triumphant church, rendering "many mansions" absolutely necessary, so does the enormous height point to its glory.—People have often been at a loss to comprehend the reason for such vast dimensions—12,000 stadia in length, breadth, and height—and hence have gone about to lessen the measurements. Thus it has been supposed, that the 12,000 stadia announced belong to the circumference of the whole city, and that each side is only to be regarded as

1 Comp. Heyne, Opusc. I. p. 161: Pythagoraei divinam naturam omninoque omnem perfectionem et absolutionem *quadrato* adumbrant. Simonides, with Plato in the Protagoras, calls the perfect man χερσίτε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ τετράγωνον, and explains this by ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον; comp., besides Arist. Eth. I. 10; Rhet. III. 11.

extending to 3000 stadia. But it is against this view, that in Ezek. xlviii. 16, the sides of the city were each measured. Some, again, would understand the *height*, not of the houses, but of the mountain—of which, however, no mention is made in this connection. Others, still again, would refer what is said of the height to the circumstance, that all the buildings were equally high. But the height is manifestly made equal to the length and the breadth, and the relation of the houses one to another is not the subject of discourse. Then, according to this view, the height of the city would be left indeterminate. Yet we naturally expect a determination respecting this point, as the *height* of the walls is announced in the next verse. That with the height of the walls that of the city also is announced, is a groundless supposition. Nor can we understand, how in a description, which everywhere rises above the common, any one should think of constraining the particular parts into ordinary bounds.

Ver. 17. *And he measured its walls an hundred and four and forty cubits, man's measure, which is angel's measure.* Several conceive, that here the *thickness* of the wall is what is measured. But Bengel has justly remarked against that idea, "In all descriptions of cities we are wont to remark much more upon the height and length of the walls, which also strike the eye more readily, than upon their thickness, Deut. iii. 5, xxviii. 52. The height is often mentioned without the thickness, but the thickness never without the height." It also confirms this view, that in the words immediately preceding it was precisely the height of the city that was spoken of.—The expression, "man's measure, which is angel's measure," may be explained from what has already been remarked at ch. xiii. 8. When an angel measures, we might suppose that he would do so after some measurement unknown to us. The remark is intended to meet this idea. Because angels, when they measure, do it only for men, man's measure is at the same time angel's measure, and the 144 cubits are common cubits. We must not expound: according to man's measure, which is here, *in this case*, angel's measure.

Ver. 18. *And the building of its wall was jasper, and the city was pure gold like to pure glass.* The subject of ver. 18—21 is, the glory and splendour of the new Jerusalem. First here, the wall and city as the two great objects which attract the eye,

the city projecting high above the walls; then, as the eye glances downwards, the foundations of the walls and gates; lastly, the streets of the city. The fundamental passage for ver. 18—21 is Isa. liv. 11, 12, where the glory of the Jerusalem that was to be is thus described, "Behold I lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I make thy battlements of rubies, and thy gates of precious stones, and all thy borders of select stones." — The *building* here forms the contrast to the *foundation*, in ver. 19, and denotes what is built on it.[1] The building consists only of *one* material. The most glorious among stones is chosen, the jasper (see at ver. 11.) A great variety, however, is found, in respect to the *foundations*. There the jasper takes the first place. It may seem strange, that the jasper, to which the glory of God is compared in ver. 11, should appear here as material for building. But if the author, out of respect to ver. 11, had chosen an inferior stone, another wall of a more glorious description might then have been conceived of. But this must be regarded as the most glorious imaginable.—The *city*, as distinguished from the *wall* here, and the *street* in ver. 21, can only denote its mass of houses. These, however, are not believers themselves, but their places of abode. —The *gold* (Bengel: "the white jasper-colour and the yellow gold suit admirably together") comes into consideration here, as in ch. xvii. 4, in respect to its *splendour*. From the connection it denotes, not "the purity and excellence of faith in the elect," but the glory, with which they shall be crowned by God in reward of their fidelity. The point of comparison between the gold and the glass is expressly intimated; it stands simply in the *purity*; the transparency, which is noticed in ver. 21, of the glass, not of the gold, is taken into account merely as a symbol of purity. The gold by the predicate of purity is distinguished from other gold, which is not pure; in the glass, on the other hand, the predicate of purity serves to distinguish it from other objects, which are not pure. Glass, considered generally, is pure, and on this account, what is pure only exceptionally is compared with it. The

1 The word ἐνδόμησις, properly *in-building*, occurs only here, it seems, and in Josephus, Ant. XV. 9, 6, where it is used of a mole in a harbour. The building on, in respect to its firm and close connection with the foundation, might be called an in-building.

subject here is not transparent gold. Not its splendour, not its transparency, but its absolute purity and homogeneity are the qualities regarded.[1]

Ver. 19.[2] *The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with all precious stones. The first foundation a jasper, the second a sapphire, the third a chalcedony, the fourth an emerald.* Ver. 20. *The fifth a sardonyx, the sixth a sardius, the seventh a chrysolite, the eighth a beryll, the ninth a topaz, the tenth a chrysopras, the eleventh a hyacinth, the twelth an amethyst.* Bengel: "Not only did each precious stone form an ornament in the foundation, but it constituted the foundation itself." It could not otherwise be said, the first foundation was a jasper, etc. That the precious stones here are taken into account merely as *precious* stones, appears from the expression, "with all precious stones," which distinctly brings out the point that is here to be kept in view; the entire contents of ver. 18—21, the subject of which throughout is the glory of the new Jerusalem; the comparison of ch. xvii. 4, where the gold, the precious stones and the pearls, with which Babylon was adorned, precisely as here the Jerusalem of the future, which is to inherit the glory of the world, serves to indicate its splendour; so also the comparison of Ezek. xxviii. 13, where precious stones are employed along with gold to adorn the king of Tyre; finally, the comparison of the passages, presently to be referred to, in the books of Moses. For, that the precious stones in these, on which the names of the tribes of the children of Israel were engraved, were intended merely to symbolize the glory of the people of God, is evident from the single consideration, that this is the most natural meaning that is attached to precious stones (comp. 1 Kings x. 2, 10, 11; Tob. xiii. 20; Isa. liv. 11, 12); any other can only be taken into account, if it is expressly mentioned. There can scarcely be a doubt, that the precious stones, which form the foundations, have respect to the apostles. This is implied in ver. 14, according to which the names of the twelve apostles are engraved on the foundations. It may also be inferred from the analogy of the precious stones in the books of Moses, on every

1 Mill.: Est enim aurum, cui comparatur haec civitas, simile vitro, non omnifariam ac quoad διαφανές, sed quoad puritatem ac τὸ ὁμογενές partium.

2 The *and*, which is prefixed by Luther, is wanting in the best authorities.

one of which was engraved the name of one of the tribes of Israel. But it has, without any proper warrant, been supposed, that a precious stone has here been assigned to every individual apostle, whose peculiar gifts were imaged by the distinctive properties of the stone; and hence pains have been taken to point out the correspondence between the precious stones mentioned and the different apostles. In that case, the order of the apostles would have required to be a quite settled one, which it by no means is, (see the survey taken of the variations in Bengel's Gnomon on the verse.) So, too, the symbolical meaning of the different precious stones would require to be distinctly marked, and by other passages of Scripture firmly established. We are never in this book thrown on an uncertain conjecture. Then, it is opposed by the analogy of the twelve precious stones on the breastplate of the high-priest. That the order of the tribes was neither directly nor indirectly determined by these,[1] shews, that no importance was attached to the matter, that the glory denoted by the precious stones belonged to the individuals, not as such, but only as parts of the whole; precisely as also in the blessings pronounced by Jacob and Moses that, speaking generally, is only individually applied to the particular tribes, which belongs to the whole. So that we must here rest in the conclusion, that *by the variety in the precious stones is symbolized the richness of the glorious gifts of God, which unfolded themselves in the apostles.*[2] In the first stone alone, the jasper, one might perhaps suppose a special allusion to Peter, as not only did he uniformly take the first place among the apostles, but also in Matth. x. 2, he is expressly and emphatically marked as the *first*. In

1 Bähr has found such an indirect determination in the analogy of the two precious stones, through which the ephod was bound together above on the shoulders. As upon this, so also on the breast-plate are the names to be regarded as written according to the respective ages. But the supposition, that the order of age was followed in the inscriptions on those two precious stones, rests on a wrong exposition of תולדותם in Ex. xxviii. 10, which was certainly rendered by the Vulgate: Juxta ordinem nativitatis eorum, and to the same effect also by Jonathan. Grammatically it can only mean: according to their generations; and what it indicates is, that the children of Israel come into consideration here, not as individuals, but in regard to the tribes sprung from them; comp. Gen. xlix. 28, xxv. 13.

2 So already Mark: Praestantissimos lapides collegit, ut insigne et vere incomprehensibile coelestis civitatis decus, uno aliquo emblemate neutiquam exprimendum, vivide magis repraesentaret.

so far as the foundations represent the apostles, the precious stones denoted not so much the glorious gifts, with which they were even in this life endowed by God, (as Bengel remarks: "Whatever is beautiful in the natural colours, is to be found united in the twelve precious stones, and among the twelve apostles each one has a distinctive spiritual character, so that together they exhibit much more fully, than each one could do alone, the glorious image of Christ"), as rather the glory which they enjoy in the new Jerusalem. Dan. xii. 3 is therefore to be compared, "The teachers shall shine as the brightness of heaven, and they, who turn many to righteousness, as stars for ever and ever." So also is 1 Cor. xv. 41. The expression itself seems to indicate as much: the already existing foundations are now adorned. And the entire contents of ver. 18—21, point in the same direction, since throughout it the new glory of the new Jerusalem is described as what the militant church had in prospect. In Isa. liv. 11, 12, also, the splendour of the precious stones is promised to the church in her misery as a consolation, while the heavy storms of life were passing over her. But the variety of precious gifts, with which the apostles were endowed in this life, certainly forms the *basis* of the diversified glory with which they shall shine forth in the new Jerusalem. We remarked already, that the passage of Isaiah just referred to, is the general fundamental passage for ver. 18—21. But the *special* fundamental passage here is Ex. xxviii. 17—20 (comp. the repetition in Ex. xxxix. 10—13), according to which the breastplate of the high-priest was composed of twelve precious stones set in gold, with the names engraved on them of the twelve tribes of Israel. In support of the reference to this, there is not only the similarity of the number twelve, but also the circumstance, that the stones, so far as we can with certainty determine them, are the same. Bellerman, in his work on the Urim and Thummim, p. 91, remarks in this respect: "In the Revelation of St John, ch. xxi. 19, where the twelve stones are introduced, they have all a different position. Otherwise, with one exception, they are the same, as given in the LXX., and Ezekiel, Josephus, Epiphanius, the Italic. The chrysopras alone is new here, which was formerly placed on the vacant part of the anthrax, although anthrax and chrysopras are different. There is, however, a red chrysopras, which

approaches in colour to the anthrax." Add to this the agreement as to matter. The glory of the people of God, symbolized by the Mosaic precious stones, finds in the precious stones of the Revelation its last and fullest realization. The latter primarily, indeed, symbolize the glory of the apostles. But the distinction is very nearly removed by the circumstance, that the apostles are the heads of the church, and in them this is honoured and glorified. — That St John in his enumeration of the precious stones intentionally departs from the order of Moses, is plain from the fact, that he sets the jasper in the very first place, which there holds the last — a thing that can scarcely be accidental. The simplest reason that can be given is, that he would thereby teach us to seek for no mystery in the arrangement, and to regard it as in Moses also a matter of indifference (see similar indications in ch. xiii. 18, and here ver. 17.) Those, who assign other reasons, involve themselves in artificial hypotheses, which must be quite far-fetched in an exposition of the Apocalypse. The one most generally received is that given in the Berleb. Bible: "The last on the breastplate of Aaron and the first here is one, and unites together the Alpha and the Omega, ends the Old and begins the New." But this is refuted by the consideration, that the jasper cannot have a reason assigned for it separate and apart from the other changes introduced into the arrangement.—Bengel remarks: "Because the names of the twelve tribes of Israel are upon the twelve gates, it is to be supposed, that each particular gate and each foundation was connected separately with some one tribe and some one apostle. It may, therefore, be asked, how we are to combine and associate them with each other?" But that there is no solid foundation for such a combination, is evident from the necessity of drawing on one's imagination to make it out.—Along with this reference to the precious stones of the tribes of Israel, a *polemical* connection is found to have place in respect to the precious stones, whereby in Ezek. xxviii. 13, in allusion to Ex. xxviii.,[1] the proud splendour of the king of Tyre is denoted, which seemed to be a matter-of-fact irony on the promises imparted to Israel; and a reference also to ch.

1 That we must not press the reference into particulars is evident from three of the precious stones being left out of the middle. In place of the number twelve, ten is put, while gold is added.

xvii. 4 of this book, where the woman appears as bespangled with gold and precious stones and pearls, the same number *three* that occurs here in ver. 18—21. The world may possibly for a time carry itself proudly, it may have a transient glory granted to it; but the church can look on with a quiet and composed spirit, for she knows that it must soon come to an end.

Ver. 21. *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, every several gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.* That the description of the new Jerusalem is not to be taken in a realistic sense, that its glory is only represented under images derived from what is most glorious on the earth as it now is, is evident especially from the expression: each of one pearl, with which prosaic expositors, like J. D. Michaelis, have found themselves so much embarrassed. The street, in contrast to the *city* in ver. 18, stands here, as in ch. xi. 8, xxii. 2, for the streets. The whole of the streets are thrown together into one ideal street. It is not to be conceived, that a city of such compass should have only one street. Had such been the case, it would have been expressly said. The transparency of glass is mentioned as a sign of its purity, and it is the purity of gold, which alone is taken into account, (comp. at ver. 18.)

Ver. 22. *And I saw no temple therein. For, the Lord God, the Almighty, is its temple, and the Lamb.* The temple is contemplated here entirely after its specific Old Testament character. The temple was the brightest ornament of the typical Jerusalem, comp. Ps. cxxii. 1; Jer. vii. 4. To dwell spiritually in it, was deemed by godly persons the greatest boon they could enjoy in life, their highest privilege—comp. Ps. xxiii. 6, "I dwell in the house of the Lord for ever," Ps. xxvii. 4; "One thing sought I of the Lord, that do I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to meditate thereon in his sanctuary," Ps. lxxxiv. 3. The foundation of this view of the temple lies in this, that in it God had given a pledge to his people of his gracious fellowship with them. Whoever sought him under the old covenant, could find him only in the temple, in which God confirmed his word spoken in Ex. xxv. 8, "They shall make me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in the midst of them," comp. xxix. 40, 46, "and I dwell

in the midst of the children of Israel." The name itself of the temple in its first form, Ohel Moed, the tent of meeting, characterizes it as the place where God was to meet with his people, entered into communion with them, (comp. my Beitr. Th. III. p. 628, sq.) But what was the highest privilege of the Old Covenant, that was not the highest, which God could, and was designed, to give to his people. Union with God, the eternal good and source of all good, as it was represented by the temple, was only a provisional, an imperfect one. The privilege of the Old Testament was at the same time its defect. How imperfectly the fellowship of God with his people was represented by the temple, appears from the longing eye directed toward the future by those who enjoyed it, especially the liveliness of their hope toward the Messiah. All Messianic hope was a proof of poverty in respect to the temple. But because in the kingdom of God the imperfect is a prophecy of the perfect, the temple pointed forwards to a real union between God and his people. This took place in Christ. If the union of God with his people formed the kernel of the sanctuary, the manifestation of Christ must stand related to it as the body to the shadow. By means of it God truly dwelt among his people. He took from them and among them flesh and blood. To this typical relationship, in which the tabernacle and temple stand to the manifestation of Christ, John alludes in ch. i. 14. In ch. ii. 19, also, Christ appears as the antitype to the temple, (see the Beitr. Th. III. p. 634) A similar indication is found also in Col. ii. 9, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," where Christ is referred to as the true tabernacle—comp. besides Col. i. 19. With the personal manifestation of God in Christ, however, we must combine his dwelling among his people by his Holy Spirit, which stands related to the former as a stream to its source, (comp. Matth. xxviii. 20, and especially 1 Tim. iii. 15; 2 Cor. vi. 16.) Because in the militant church the presence of God is still not perfectly realized, from the bodily presence of the Lord having been soon withdrawn from it again (comp. ch. xii. 5), and from the agency of his Spirit being subjected to manifold restraints, *it is only the triumphant church that is to be regarded as the full antitype of the Old Testament type.* There only the words, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men," and "I saw no

temple therein, for the Lord God the Almighty is its temple and the Lamb," however they may be verified even during the period of the church's warfare, will find their complete and perfect realization. We have an Old Testament parallel passage in Jer. iii. 16, 17, "It will then no more be said, The ark of the covenant of the Lord! neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it; neither shall they miss it, nor shall another be made. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the heathen shall be gathered to it, because the name of the Lord is at Jerusalem." The ark of the covenant was the heart of the temple, the kernel and centre of the Old Covenant, "How infinitely great must be the compensation that was to be given for it, if this were to make the desire after it to cease, and itself to be forgotten, as belonging to the beggarly elements, to the image and shadow. We have here the announcement of an entire annihilation of the earlier form of God's kingdom, but of such an annihilation of the form, as is, at the same time, the highest perfectionment of the substance, a dissolution like that of the seed-corn, which dies only that it may bring forth much fruit, or of the body, which is sown in corruption, that it may be raised up in incorruption." In so far as the temple generally was the symbol of the church, it cannot be wanting in the new Jerusalem; it must be there as certainly as the church also is in heaven, (comp. ch. vii. 15, xi. 19, xiv. 15.) That the temple *once* existed, is a pledge of its everlasting continuance. No truly divine institution can be of a merely temporal nature, (Matth. v. 17.) That the temple is only in a certain sense wanting in the new Jerusalem, is evident even from the assertion here. For, the temple is not simply denied to it; it is accorded as well as denied. The designation of God: The Lord God the Almighty, points to the glory of the compensation. Where he is in the whole glory of his being, with the whole fulness of his gifts, there the loss of the poor temple with its imperfect manifestation of God's presence is to be considered real gain. Along with the Almighty God the Lamb is named. Bengel: "Thus are the same glorious properties ascribed to God and the Lamb, ver. 23, ch. xxii. 1, 3, vii. 10." Comp. v. 13, vi. 16, vii. 10. It is precisely through the Lamb, that the Almighty God has become for the church the reality of the

temple. Till John knew the Lamb the temple was to him his one and all. From the entire cast of his mind we may be sure he clung to it with the most profound regard. That the Lamb still did not exist, was the cause of the old temple's poverty, of the imperfect manner in which it displayed God's presence. Immanuel ! so was it proclaimed at the moment of Christ's appearance in the flesh; so still more loudly was it proclaimed when he finished the atonement; and so yet again, most gloriously of all, will it be proclaimed in the new Jerusalem.

Ver. 23. *And the city needs not the sun and the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and its light is the Lamb.* In the preceding verse it was represented how the glory of God, streaming forth from the Lamb, threw into the shade the earthly temple; here it is represented how that glory darkens the natural light. The fundamental passage is Isa. lx. 19, 20, "The sun shall no more shine to thee by day, and the brightness of the moon shall not give light to thee; but the Lord will be thy eternal light, and thy God thy ornament. Thy sun shall no more go down, nor thy moon lose her shining; for the Lord will be thy eternal light, and the days of thy mourning are at an end." We may compare besides Isa. xxiv. 23, "And the moon is ashamed, and the sun is confounded, for the Lord of Hosts reigns on Mount Zion, and at Jerusalem, and before his elders is honour." The sun and moon are *ashamed* there, because they are outshone by the uncreated light. We have no reason to suppose, that the illuminating glory of the Lord specially corresponds to the *sun*, and the Lamb serving as a light specially to the *moon;* the less so, as in the history of the work of creation the sun not less than the moon is denoted a *light.* In the fundamental passage of Isaiah the Lord forms the contrast to *both* the sun and moon. So are we here also to explain; for instead of the sun and the moon the glory of the Lord enlightens it, and instead of the sun and moon the Lamb is its light. The glory of God and the Lamb are most intimately connected together. The city has the glory of God only because, and in so far as it has the Lamb. That the moon receives her light from the sun, is never taken into account in Scripture, but very often the smallness of her light and its inferior lustre as compared with the sun's. If we, then, should connect the glory of God with the sun, and

regard the Lamb as specially corresponding with the moon, the Lamb, who is here represented as "in the midst of the throne," (ch. vii. 17), who "has a name written that no one knows but himself," (ch. xix. 12), "whose name is called the Word of God," (ch. xix. 13), would be presented in a lower attitude than accords with the main representations of the Apocalypse and of St John generally, and in one also that might well prove a stumbling-block to a Christian mind. It would be good Arianism, but bad doctrine according to John and the church. Bengel: "Whoever has the hope of entering into this holy city, may peacefully shut his eyes at the end of his pilgrimage, and withdraw himself from the delights of a present world."

Ver. 24. *And the heathen shall walk through its light,*[1] *and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.* The fundamental passage is Isa. lx. 3, "And the heathen walk in thy light (not: *to* thy light), and kings in the brightness which goes forth on thee." And the preceding verse: "The Lord goes forth over thee, and his honour appears upon thee." The light here, as in Isaiah, is the glory of the Lord manifesting itself in the church, which is to shine forth in the new Jerusalem with the fullest and most cloudless splendour. The light irradiates the way so much for the heathen, that they walk, as it were, *through* it; though the *through* is substantially the same as *by*.—Ἔθνη in the usage of the Revelation are not nations generally, but always *heathen* nations, in their natural or christianized state; comp. at ch. xx. 3. That we are to think here only of *converted* heathen, is clear as day. No room for conversion can be found on the further side of ch. xx. 15; for every one, who had not been found written in the book of life, has already been cast into the lake of fire. But the designation was the more natural, as at the time when John saw the Apocalypse, they still actually were heathens. The heathen, besides, are not to be conceived of as without the city; but being *within* the city they shall be illuminated by its light, according to the representation in the immediately following verse, and in the whole of Isa. lx. The situations of the several parties here are altogether of an absolute kind. All are either in the new Jerusalem, or

[1] Luther's translation, "and the heathen, that are saved, walk in the light of it," follows the less supported reading, καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τῶν σωζομένων, ἐν τῷ φωτὶ αὐτῆς περιπατήσουσι.

in the lake of fire (ver. 8.) There is no third position.—The kings of the earth bring their glory into the new Jerusalem. The *bringing* belongs only to the symbolical style of the delineation. He sees them as it were coming in procession; as also in ch. xxii. 14, mention is made of the entrance of all true citizens into the gates of the city. The expression is merely an embodiment of the thought, that the kings with their glory shall participate in it. This implies, that they had formerly brought their glory into the kingdom of grace (comp. ch. xv. 4, xvii. 14.) Then, it is quite manifest, that the glory can be brought into the new Jerusalem only in so far as it is capable of being glorified; that all false glitter and earthly pomp must disappear. But in the kingdom of glory there reigns no *levelling equality*. It would otherwise stand below the kingdom of grace, and be like the land of shadows, "where there is no order," Job. x. 22. As among the angels there are distinctions of rank and order (comp. at ch. viii. 2), so shall there be among glorified men. If all were ruled according to a bare democratic uniformity, the *teachers* could not have the position that is assigned them in Daniel, nor the apostles the position indicated respecting them in ver. 14, 19. It is contrary to all sound feeling, that a David, that a Charles the great should there be lost without distinction among the general mass. Bengel remarks, "when the heathen in the world yield themselves to Christ, their earthly glory will elevate them, and will be changed into a heavenly glory, so that they shall be brought with it into the holy Jerusalem. So is it with other natural and worldly distinctions, such as wisdom, skill, strength, accomplishments, ability, and the like. Whosoever consecrates what he has in these to God and Christ, instead of desecrating it, like others, by the love of self and the world, will thereby be ennobled in the holy city. It does not mean, that all kings of the earth with their earthly glory shall come into the holy city. Very many fail in respect to it. But what is really glorious among the kings of the earth, and is sanctified through faith in Jesus Christ, that will be regarded as an acceptable present, and as a becoming addition to the fulness of the holy city. As it is in respect to kings, so is it also proportionately in respect to their subjects." Mark also says, "As the most glorious kings here have a share in grace, so shall they ultimately have in glory, and this will be a source

of glory to the heavenly commonwealth; as cities are wont to be held in highest estimation, which have the most illustrious inhabitants." The *heathen* and *kings* are brought into view here as an ornament of the new Jerusalem. The kingdom of God should, according to its idea, be universal in its dominion. But this idea was very imperfectly realized during the Old Testament; and still also in the militant church much is wanting for its realization; indeed, in St John's time it had scarcely so much as begun. The worldly power stood then in all its pomp and glory looking with indifference on the kingdom of God, or even manifesting hostility towards it. This contrast between the idea and the reality must, if it were to be regarded as a permanent one, shake faith. St John meets here the ground of offence thence arising. In the new world the bearers of the worldly power shall either have become impotent, and have been consigned to eternal misery, or they shall have entered with their peoples into the kingdom of God. From this investigation, also, it becomes obvious, why it is that only the heathen with their kings are mentioned among the citizens of the new Jerusalem, and not also the elect portion of the Jews. The latter did not require any special mention.

Ver. 25. *And its gates shall not be shut by day; for there shall be no night there.* Ver. 26. *And they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations into it.* The words, "for there shall be no night there," intimate the reason why the day merely is spoken of, since commonly the gates of a city are to be shut during night. The words, "and they shall bring," &c. give the reason why the gates stand continually open, that the glory and honour of the heathen may find entrance into the new Jerusalem, which in St John's time was so hard a matter for faith. The fundamental passage is Isa. lx. 11, "And thy gates stand open continually, day and night they shall not be shut, to bring to thee the riches of the heathen, and their kings shall be led." Neither here, nor in the passage before us, is any respect had to *rest* and *security*, as the reason for the gates standing open. Day and night in Isaiah is as much as continually. The night, in the sense in which it is here said to have ceased, is there also brought to an end, ver. 20. The difference between the two passages is merely in the letter. Ver. 7 is to be supplied from

ver. 20.—There will be no night there, namely, because the glory of the Lord shall constantly enlighten it—comp. ver. 11, 23, xxii. 5, where we learn that the reason of there being no night in it, arises from the constant shining of the Lord on it. Night denotes a state destitute of blessing, such as always enters when the gracious presence of the Lord is withheld. The militant church is in this respect subjected to a continual alternation. The sad word, "and it was night," John xiii. 30, is often quite overlooked both in regard to the church as a whole, and to individual believers. Allusion is made to Isa. lx. 10, "Thy sun shall no more go down, and thy moon shall not withdraw herself, for the Lord will be to thee for an everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

Ver. 27. *And there shall not enter into thee any thing whatever common, and which does abomination and lies; but only those that are written in the Lamb's book of life.* Instead of "anything whatever common," it is properly, "all general." By Adam's fall human nature has become wholly corrupt. So that the general has at the same time become the *common*, the *unclean*. Separation is needed, if one would not live with the world, and be judged with the world (2 Cor. vi. 17.) The Pharisees derived their name from this separation. What they sought after in the flesh, must be sought after by Christians in the Spirit. Bengel: "By right holiness should be the common thing, but the great apostacy has unfortunately intervened, and hence that cannot be common which properly belongs to God."—*Abomination*, which is similarly mentioned in ch. xxi. 8, xxii. 15, comp. also at ch. xvii. 4, 5. In regard to the notion of *lie* as meant by John, see at ch. xiv. 5, xxi. 8. In regard to the Lamb's book of life, see at ch. xiii. 8. It is implied that all who are not written in the Lamb's book of life, have been addicted to the previously mentioned sins; while such as have been atoned for by the blood of the Lamb, and have accordingly been written in his book of life, are free from them.

Ch. xxii. 1. *And he shewed me a*[1] *river of the water of life,*

1 Luther has a "*pure* river." But the καθαρόν is not sufficiently authenticated. Bengel has remarked that καθαρὸν and λαμπρὸν are sometimes in Revelation found together, in respect to garments, but in nothing else. In ch. xv. 6, xix. 8, 14, the two together make good enough sense; but here καθαρὸν would hardly suit, as the quality of purity is not of moment.

shining like chrystal; which went from the throne of God and of the Lamb. That we are not to explain with Luther: living water, appears alone from a comparison of ch. vii. 17. It appears likewise from ch. xxi. 27, where the book of life is spoken of (the last words of which verse form the connecting link with ours), and ver. 2 here, where we read of the *tree* of life. If this then is certain, there can be no doubt in regard to the signification of the water, and explanations like that of Bengel, "the power of the Holy Spirit which makes all fresh and fruitful," of themselves fall to the ground. The water signifies, according to the express declaration of the author himself, *life*, that is, salvation, blessedness (comp. on the notion of life in John at ch. vii. 17.) The great *fulness* of life, which belongs to the glorified church, is represented here under the image of its pouring itself forth as a *river*. In Ezekiel, ch. xlvii., a pictorial delineation is given of the greatness of this river. The glorious nature of the life is represented by the "shining like chrystal."—St John was deeply penetrated by the conviction, that man, so soon as he believes in the Son of God, is thereby raised from death to life. But we still are not warranted to say with Koestlin, p. 238, "John is too sure of life, and is always too deeply conscious of its power and blessedness, to think of representing hope in respect to the possession of life as the peculiar mental characteristic of the Christian." The tone of depression that pervades his Gospel is a proof of the contrary, as also the entire description of the Christian state in the last discourses of Christ: The world hates you, you shall have tribulation in the world, you need the Comforter to support you under all your distress and sorrow, you need to have your eye directed to the eternal blessedness and glory, that your heart may not be appalled (John xiv. 2, 3, xvii. 24, comp. 1 John ii. 25, 28, iii. 2.) Were it otherwise, St John would have been an idealistic visionary, which God forbid! There are not *two* lives, but only *one* life, which begins the moment we attain to faith in Christ, and continues through all eternity—though this life, during all the period of our sojourn in the world, is still interwoven with manifold troubles and interruptions, both of an inward (1 John i. 8) and an outward kind. In the *future* state of being alone will the germ of life fully develope itself. Life in the *present* state of being is as plainly recognized in the Revela-

tion as it is in the Gospel. To be living and not dead is set forth in it as the Christian state (Rev. iii. 1.) That in the Revelation the future phase of the divine life should be more prominently brought out, the present in the Gospel arises simply from the circumstance that the Gospel must represent, what we *have already received through Christ*, the Revelation *what he will yet give to his servants.* Add to this, that the Revelation was seen at a time *when dark shadows had settled down on the life of Christians.*—The type of the river here is the river that at first watered paradise. That allusion is made to that admits of less doubt, as here, precisely as in Gen. ii. 9, 10, the river and the tree are placed in immediate connection with each other. In Ps. xxxvi. 8, "And thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures," David sees in this river the type of those streams of delight, which God's love even now pours down to refresh his people. *Here* the true antitype is transferred to eternity. Then, we ought to compare Joel iii. 18, "A fountain goes out of the house of the Lord, and waters the valley of Shittim;" also Ezek. xlvii., where a stream flows out of the sanctuary, and, after vivifying and fertilizing the desert, empties itself into the Dead Sea; finally, Zech. xiv. 8, "And it comes to pass in that day, that living waters shall go forth out of Jerusalem, their half toward the east sea, and their half toward the west sea, in summer and in winter shall it be." The fountain is the fountain of blessing, of salvation, of life. The waters quicken the dry and thirsty desert of man's necessities (see Christol. II. p. 367.) These Old Testament promises find here their last and most glorious fulfilment. The most horrible manifestation of death is being morally dead; the most frightful side of human misery is enmity or indifference toward God. This side of death and misery, which Ezekiel takes quite peculiarly into account, who, as Joel had done before and Zechariah after him, still contemplates the salvation of Christ as *one* whole, and so comprises in it the life, the bestowal of which has already been celebrated by John in the Gospel—*that* side has here been *already done away.* The river of life here pours itself forth only for those, who have died in the Lord, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. —That the river here is for quenching the thirst, or satisfying the desire of blessedness, appears from ch. xxi. 6, xxii. 17. "The

poor and needy seek for water, and there is none, their tongue faints for thirst," this is too often verified in the parched wilderness of the present life.—The river goes *from the throne of God and of the Lamb*, in accordance with the declaration, "All that the Father hath is mine." Bengel: "Here, and in ver. 3, the glory of Christ is described in the most glorious manner, the Father's throne being also spoken of as his throne." Comp. at ch. vii. 17, according to which the Lamb is in the midst of the throne. God is thus set forth as in Christ the dispenser of life or blessing. Christ is called the Lamb, because through his labours and blood he has won for us this *crown* of all his gifts.—It is a small idea, to suppose that John here alludes to a natural spring under the temple in the Old Jerusalem. This is the less to be imagined, as there really did not exist a proper spring under the temple. Water was merely conveyed to it through a conduit.

Ver. 2. *In the midst of the street of it, and on both sides*[1] *of the river, the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, and brought forth its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the heathen.* Besides *thirst* the Lord's people are in this life also liable to *hunger* (comp. Matth. v. 6; Rev. vii. 16.) Hence life or salvation is here represented as the *fruit of a tree*, as in the preceding verse it had been imaged by water. That the tree should be called the *tree of life*, because the participation of its fruit imparts life, appears from a comparison of Gen. iii. 22, "And now, lest he should stretch forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever." There can be no doubt that allusion is here made to this paradisiacal tree of life from ch ii. 7, "He that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, that is *in the paradise of my God.*" Bengel: "A sure way is laid open in the holy city to that tree of life, which Adam was debarred from touching." It is also referred

[1] The expression ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν occurs in the whole of the New Testament only here and in John xix. 18, and by that parallel alone is strongly confirmed in opposition to the other certainly well supported reading ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν. In regard to the origin of the latter, Bengel says briefly and well: Ex opinione elegantiae Hebraismo praeferendae. The ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν does not occur in Greek authors, but frequently in the LXX., comp. Numb. xxii. 24; Dan. xii. 5. We can entertain the less doubt of its originality, since it corresponds exactly to מזה ומזה of the fundamental passage in Ezekiel. From that passage also there can be no doubt that we must render: and on both sides of the river.

to in Ezek. xlvii. 7, "When I turned back, behold on the border of the river there was wood very much, on both sides;" and ver. 12, "And by the river on its banks at either side grew every kind of tree of eatable fruit; its leaf withers not, and its fruit ceases not; all months does it ripen; for its waters come out of the sanctuary. And its fruit serves for food, and its leaf for healing." By an unseasonable comparison of Ps. i. 3, Jer. xvii. 8, several have there wished to understand by the trees the *righteous;* in which also there lies at bottom the erroneous supposition, that by the waters are denoted the outpouring of the Spirit, which can only come into view as a *part* in the *whole* of life or salvation, certainly for Ezekiel a very important part, since his prospect still comprehended the *militant* church, in which healing grace is of peculiar moment. If we fail to perceive that the tree in Ezekiel is the tree of life, we violently tear his prophecy from its connection with Gen. ii. 9, iii. 22, on the one hand, and with the passage before us on the other.—The *variety* of the trees in Ezekiel and here on both sides of the river seems to present an important deviation from the representation given in Genesis, where only *one* tree of life is spoken of. But this latter point admits of some doubt. It is said "the *tree* of life which is in the midst of the garden;" and at any rate it had conjoined with it as a type "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food," which the Lord is said, in the immediately preceding context, to have made to spring out of the earth, and which we can suppose, according to ver. 10, to have grown on the banks of the river. We must still think of these trees as trees of life in the more general sense, the tree of life only as such in the highest degree. Farther, in Ezekiel the tree of life stands only on both sides of the river; here it stands also in the middle of the street. But from the connection in which the tree of life stands with the water of life, we can scarcely think that by this is meant a second quite separate position. We are rather to suppose that the river flows through the street, and that the tree of life stands on both sides of the stream.—The tree yielding new fruits every month simply indicates, that in the new Jerusalem the enjoyment of life shall be without interruption; otherwise than in the present world, where death is constantly breaking in anew with violence upon life. We are not

to think of *different kinds* of fruits. Luther has put improperly *twelve sorts* for twelve.—It is not said that the leaves of the tree *shall* serve for the healing of the heathen; but the power is only attributed to them generally, of producing healing, without intimating whether this was to take place first in the new Jerusalem, or should have begun to do so here. We must understand this latter to be the case. It is only in respect to the present state of things that it could be said, "he healed them who had need of healing," (Luke ix. 11.) Healing implies *disease*. But this belongs only to the present life. They alone enter into the glory of heaven, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. But the new Jerusalem comes down from heaven, ch. xxi. 2. Into its gates they only enter who have made themselves *ready*, who are arrayed in pure and white clothing (ch. xix. 7, 8, comp. xxi. 2.) Nor beyond the confines of the new Jerusalem is there any other resting place but the lake of fire; so that the remark of Bengel, "This might throw some light on the question, how it shall fare in eternity with the heathen, who have not received the gospel," is to be entirely rejected. No intermediate state is to be thought of as possible, where all the circumstances are of a fixed character, and no room is left for change. We can the less conceive of a dwelling of the heathen outside Jerusalem, since it is within this that the tree of life stands. To bring the enjoyment of the leaves within this present life is also the more natural, since in ch. ii. 7, which points to the future world, it is only the eating of the fruit that is spoken of. One point only comes into consideration in respect to the *leaves*, that they are *inferior* to the *fruit*, and regard is not had to the power of healing corporeal disease, which resides in many natural leaves. The fruit is nobler than the leaves; if, then, the leaves are so sanatory, how efficacious must be the fruit? The powers of life, which descend from the Jerusalem above on this poor earth for the healing of wretched sinners, are a foretaste of the surpassing blessedness, which may be expected in the new Jerusalem by the just made perfect.

Ver. 3. *And there shall be no more curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him.* The first words are taken from Zech. xiv. 11, "And they dwell in it, and there shall be no more curse in

it, and Jerusalem is securely enthroned." On that passage it was remarked in the Christology, "The words, There shall be no more curse, represent the whole church of God as consisting, after this catastrophe, of the purely righteous and holy, and therefore no longer, as in former times, to be purified by sifting theocratical judgments. In the new Jerusalem the penal justice of God will no more find an object; so that his whole procedure toward her will be an uninterrupted manifestation of his love and righteousness." In regard to the meaning of the *curse*, see my Christology on Mal. iv. 6. Among other things, it was there said, "The idea of *cursing* is always that of the forced consecration to God of those who had obstinately refused to consecrate themselves voluntarily to him—of the manifestation of the divine glory in the destruction of those, who during their life-time would not reflect it, and therefore would not realize the general destination of man, the design of all creation. God sanctifies himself *upon* all those, *in* whom he is not sanctified. The destruction of every thing on earth, which will not serve him, proclaims his praise." God constantly declares anew to his militant church what he said of old to Joshua, ch. vii. 12, "The children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed; for they have even taken of the accursed thing; neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed from among you." Times of *revival* are constantly followed again by times of *decay;* times, in which the true city becomes an harlot, in which iniquity rises to the ascendant; and then, where the carcase is, there the eagles gather themselves together; God proves himself to be the jealous God, who visits the iniquities of the fathers on the children.—The clause, "and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it," is very closely connected with that, which declares, "there shall be no more curse." Because there is no more curse, that is, no more an object of cursing, the gracious presence of God and of Christ shall no longer be liable to such a withdrawal as of old, when it was said to the Jews, as the curse began to alight on them, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate; ye shall not henceforth see me, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matth. xxiii. 38, 39); and so does he virtually speak from time to time to his church. The more the

time happens to be one of cursing, so much the more refreshing and consolatory for the true members of the church should be this word of Christ, "And there shall be no more curse, and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it."—In regard to the *serving* as connected with high *grace* and *reward*, see on ch. vii. 15. It is said, "His servants shall serve him," not, their servants shall serve them; according to the word, "I and my Father are one."[1]—The fut. in ver. 3—5, serve to shew, as Bengel has justly remarked, that "there shall be an everlasting continuance in the glorious things here described." Up to this the Seer wrote what he *had seen*; here writing in such a manner could no longer suffice, and the description must take the form of prophecy.

Ver. 4. *And they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads.* To see God's face means to enjoy God's favour (see my Comm. on Ps. xvii. 15, also Matt. v. 8.)—In ch. xiv. 1, the chosen bear the name of God on their foreheads as a mark of their proved *fidelity*. But here it is written on their foreheads as a *reward*—a pledge of their right to participate in all the benefits of the kingdom of glory.

Ver. 5. *And there shall be no night there, and they need no lamp, nor the light of the sun; for God the Lord will shine upon them;*[2] *and they shall reign for ever and ever.* It was said also in ver. 25 of the preceding chapter, that there should be no night there; the night there denoting, as was mentioned, the absence of blessing, which is always experienced when the gracious presence of the Lord is withdrawn, as it too often is in the militant church on account of the prevalence of iniquity. Here once again this thought returns at the close, being very consolatory

1 Bengel, "Where mention is made both of God and of the Lamb, the relative following, αὐτοῦ, is to be referred either to the Lamb (ch. vi. 17, also i. 1, xx. 6), because in such passages wrath, revelation, kingdom, is ascribed to the Lamb; or to God, as here, because the throne is more frequently spoken of in connection with God; whence also the verb βασιλεύσει is to be referred to the Lord. It is not said there, *they* will reign, nor is the plural αὐτῶν, of them, ever used respecting them, on account of the essential unity. When the Lamb is mentioned God also is indicated, as is the Lamb when God is mentioned."

2 Bengel: 'Επ' is omitted in some copies, which are defended by Wolf, who chiefly compares ch. xxi. 23. But the passages differ: the glory of God illuminates the city: upon the citizens the Lord God pours down light. So it is said in Gen. i. 15, "to give light upon the earth." The genuineness of ἐπί is defended by the most ancient codices. Allusion is specially made to Gen. i. 1.

for those who find themselves enveloped in the shades of night, and are obliged constantly to cry out, Watchman, is the night near gone? There is here a remarkable point of contact with the Gospel of John. In three passages of that Gospel, which mutually throw light on each other, and the import of which would not be so commonly misapprehended, if they were not viewed apart, but in connection with each other, and with the passages in the Revelation, by the *day* is denoted the time of grace and salvation, by the night the time of perdition, as it enters when grace is withdrawn. He who has lived with wakeful eye through the year 48, will be able to understand this distinction in John between day and night. Jesus says in John ix. 4, when he was going to heal the man that had been born blind, "I must work the works of Him who sent me, while it is *day;* the *night* cometh when no man can work." In ch. xi. Jesus asks his disciples again to march with him into Judea. "The disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?" Jesus answered in ver. 9, 10, that it was still *day*, and no danger was to be feared, this arises only when the *night* comes, in which the light of the world appears not. Luke xxii. 35, 36 is to be compared, as the Lord there points out to his disciples the difference between the time when God imparts his grace and when he withdraws it. Finally, in John xiii. 30, it is said, "But it was *night* when he went out." There can be no doubt that these words have something of an enigmatical character about them; that the natural night was regarded by John here only as the symbol of the spiritual night, when the light of grace shines not, and along with that the power of darkness begins (Luke xxii. 53); when the hour has arrived for a desperate attack on the kingdom of God. The consolatory word, "and there shall be no night there," also pre-supposes that the alternation of night and day in the spiritual life of the church shall have finally ceased in the new Jerusalem. So long as this still continues, the church must be exercised by the cross, as must also individual believers. If at *present* the night were to cease, spiritual darkness would soon acquire unconditional sway over the church, according to the word spoken of old to Israel, "When Israel waxed fat, he kicked," &c. Now, therefore, we

must let the night fall upon us, though the longing of our heart must be toward the time, when it shall be perpetual day. We could not, besides, properly enjoy the day as yet, because we are constantly apprehensive of the night coming, which often breaks so suddenly in upon us.—In regard to the *reigning* of believers, see on ch. i. 6, v. 10, xx. 6. *Here*, when the meek shall possess the earth, the kingdom of the elect shall reach its highest elevation. If till then it has reigned, with its divine head, in the midst of its enemies, thenceforth its enemies shall be for ever completely subdued, and there shall be nothing more to withstand the full establishment of its dominion. Bengel asks: "If the inhabitants of the city shall be all regents, where then shall be the subjects?" The answer, which he himself gives to this question, "outside the city upon the new earth," rests upon the quite untenable supposition, that there shall be in the future world, beside the new Jerusalem and the lake of fire, some intermediate place. A hint for the right answer is furnished by Ps. xlix. 14, where it is said of the wicked, "As sheep they are laid in hell, death feeds on them, and the righteous reign over them in the morning." There the wicked, notwithstanding their *destruction*, are the object of that ruling, which is to be exercised by the righteous. So also here. The ungodly world, which even by that parallel passage must necessarily be subject to a higher sway, is reigned over by the righteous in their earlier possession, in the arrangements which are made in behalf of them in their provisional heritage of good.

We close the exposition of this section in the words of Bengel: "Thus far of the holy city Jerusalem! Would that we may enter therein! Would that we even were therein! Now it is in our power to attain to a happy portion, if we will but turn our back on a lost world, and renounce the service of the prince of the world. There is need for a good, instant resolution to act, under the impulse of grace. But whoever has set his face stedfastly to go toward this Jerusalem, shall abide in it, and shall never err from the way of life."

THE CONCLUSION.

(Ch. xxii. 6—21.)

The conclusion of the book, in correspondence with its introduction, expressly points to its high *importance*, and at the same time applies its consolatory and refreshing fundamental truth of the coming of the Lord once more to the hearts of all saints.

Ver. 6. *And he said to me: These words are certain and true. And the Lord the God of the Spirits of the prophets has sent his angel to shew to his servants what must shortly come to pass.* The asseveration of *truth* and *certainty* was made, after the example of Daniel (ch. viii. 26), in ch. xix. 9, in respect to the great and consolatory truths of the coming of the kingdom of the Lord, of the marriage feast of the Lamb, and the fitting preparation of the bride; and again in ch. xxi. 5, in respect to the great word, "Behold I make all things new." Here it stands at the close of the whole book, which contains so much that raises it above the common, and deprives it of human probability.—The words, "and the Lord the God of the Spirits of the prophets," assign the reason of the confidence. What John has to communicate to the church belongs not to *him* (only if this were the case, could we judge the confidence expressed by a human standard); but it ascends through the medium of the angel to the Most High God. In ch. xix. 9, "These words are true, of God," the expression, "of God," corresponds. There is a reference to the beginning of the Introduction in ch. i. 1, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to shew to his servants what must shortly come to pass, and he signified it by his angel, whom he sent to his servant John." This intentional connection with the Introduction must have been designed to intimate that the conclusion of the book begins here. As the tendency of the Introduction was directed mainly to the object of shewing the high importance of the book, the conclusion also begins immediately with the same topic. If there by the servants of God the prophets are to be understood, so also here. We must explain, as was shewn on that passage: to his servants, who are represented by John. As God has all human spirits in his hand,

so has he in particular the Spirits of the prophets; that is, the spirit of each particular prophet (comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 32); so that whatever excitation any of them experience proceeds from him; and this God has in consequence communicated to his servant John through his angel the discoveries respecting the future, which are unfolded in this book. The Spirit of the prophets is the Spirit of prophecy, which rests on them (comp. ch. xix. 10.) It is *one* Spirit that moves in all the prophets (1 Pet. i. 11; 2 Pet. i. 21.) But individual prophets have each their own Spirit, differing according to that measure of the Spirit's grace, which is severally given to them.—The expression, *shortly*, is here only a subordinate intimation; *q.d.* what must come to pass, and that indeed shortly. This *shortly*, which is again resumed in ver. 7, contains a *second* reason for the high importance of the book. Threatenings and promises, which are *soon* to be fulfilled, demand the most wakeful attention on the part of all, who would not be entangled in the snare of the pregnant *too late*.—The expression, "what must shortly come to pass," which was already explained at ch. i. 1, shews, that this verse does not even *primarily* refer to what immediately precedes, to what lies beyond the thousand years' reign; but that it applies to the whole of the book. In unison with that is the fact of the coincidence with the Introduction of the book, which has the effect of emphatically stamping this as the conclusion of it.

Ver. 7. *And behold I come quickly. Blessed is he, who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.* Ver. 3 of the Introduction corresponds. There the person who reads is pronounced blessed, "for the time is near." *Here* the order is reversed: I come quickly, therefore, etc. That the declaration, "Behold I come quickly," is spoken from the person of Christ, is clear as day (comp. ver. 20.) But there is no proper change of person; the person sent only speaks from the person of the sender, as in Gen. xix. 21, 22. The angel, as he is, and because he is the angel of God, so also the angel of Christ (comp. ver. 16.) There was no reason given for bounding off the sphere of God in respect to that of Christ. In the fundamental passage also of Malachi the Lord comes in the covenant-angel.—The threefold, "Behold I come quickly," here and in ver. 12, 20 (comp. iii. 11, ii. 5, 16), refers to the Old Testament classical passage respecting the

coming of the Lord, Mal. iii. 1, "The Lord whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple, and the covenant-angel, whom ye desire, behold he comes, saith the Lord of Hosts." In no other passage of the Old Testament is the idea of *coming* so prominently brought out; first, he will come suddenly; and then again at the end, with solemn emphasis, Behold he comes. It contains all the three words of the clause before us: the behold, the coming, and the quickly (suddenly.) That the passage here has a close connection with that of Malachi is evident from what was remarked in the Christology regarding the import of the latter: "On the complaint of the people, that appearances belied the idea of a righteous God, the prophet answers, that God will soon remove this apparent contrariety between appearance and idea. He, who now seems to be absent, will soon appear in the person of his heavenly messenger. That this announcement received its final fulfilment in the appearance of Christ, in whom the angel of the Lord, the Logos, became flesh, scarcely needs to be remarked. It is equally evident, that we are not to seek this final fulfilment, either in the state of humiliation, or in the state of exaltation alone, but are rather to combine the two together as an inseparable whole. The appearance of Christ in humiliation contained in the germ every thing as to blessing and cursing which in his state of exaltation he has either already brought, or will yet bring into accomplishment." The thought in Malachi is that of the irrepressible energy and desire for outward manifestation on the part of the Logos, according to which he is always, from the time of the prophet onwards to the end of the world, carrying forward a plan, in which, as circumstances perpetually require his interposition, so he is ever ready to interfere either for salvation or for judgment. John also points to the same prophecy of Malachi, in ch. i. 9, 15, 27 of his Gospel, where he speaks of the manifestation of Christ in the flesh, and in ch. xxi. 22, the expression, I come, is found there with a reference to Malachi, precisely as here, of the *future* coming of the Lord.—It hardly needs to be remarked, that the word, "Behold I come quickly," does not refer to a single act; that it rather denotes the *gladsome character of Christ's appearing in regard to the fulfilment of all the promises and threatenings of this entire book.* Bengel: "This word *I come* admonishes us of the whole sub-

ject-matter of the book, and on this account should everything in us be raised and elevated, that the whole Apocalyptic heaven may, in a manner, turn round, before our eyes."—In ch. i. 3 the *words of the prophecy* alone are mentioned. But here there is added: of this book. This addition shews, that the completion of the *book* kept pace with the receiving of the Revelation. The book, which is also repeatedly mentioned in the following verses, must already be completed as to its main part.[1]

Ver. 8. *And I John am he, who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel, who showed me these things.* Ver. 9. *And he said to me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.* These two verses also have respect to the high importance of the book, and press it on the hearts of the readers, that they take up the right position in regard to it. A trustworthy man, a tried organ of divine communications, JOHN, whom Jesus loved, expressly assures us, that he has not spoken of his own, but only what he has heard and received. And this same John, carried away by the lofty theme of the Revelation, throws himself down before the angel, who had conveyed to him such a wonderful message. With what profound reverence, then, should not the church regard a book, which unfolds such things to her view! How should she tremble before the word of God, which is there presented to her!—In regard to the expression: I John, see at ch. i. 1, 4, 9. "But who," says Vitringa, "could he be, excepting John the apostle, known by this name to the churches, the venerable elder of the Asiatic churches?" Bengel also says, "John had placed his name in the title of his book, in the superscription to the seven churches, and at the beginning of his narrative. And now at the close he names himself still again, so that we might perfectly know, that he, namely the apostle John, had written this credible testimony of the future coming of Jesus Christ. A learned man who otherwise possessed much good, has said concerning it, that John affixes his name so frequently, that it seems as if he had wished to write an obligation. The words are almost

[1] So also toward the end of the Pentateuch, in Deuteronomy, where its speedy conclusion comes in view, Moses speaks of it as a *book;* first Deut. xvii. 18, 19, then ch. xxviii. 58, xxix. 19, 20, 26. See the Beitr. III. p. 163.

ludicrous; but we may turn them to good account. For as people set their names to important original documents, to prevent all error and uncertainty respecting them, so John does substantially the same here." In his Gospel also, ch. xxi. 24, John points to his person as a security for the truth of what is reported by him. Often, too, in the Gospel does he mention his name (ch. xiii. 23, xix. 26, xxi. 20), only he does it there *covertly*, in accordance with the objective character of all biblical history, which everywhere allows the *I* to fall back; while here, according to the custom of the prophets (see on ch. i. 1), he comes quite boldly forward, with his *I John*. It is, further, common to the Revelation and the Gospel, not only that there should be an emphatic assurance of the truth and trustworthiness of the matters reported (comp. ver. 6 here, and the parallel passages, with John xix. 35, xxi. 14), but also that there should be a special reference to the seeing and hearing (ch. i. 14, xix. 35; 1 John i. 1, 2, iv. 14.) We must here lay the emphasis on the name *John*, and on the *heard* and *saw*.—In ch. xix. 10 the offered worship had respect to the joyful message concerning the universal dominion of God, which was certainly at hand, the marriage of the Lamb, and the preparation of the bride: here, on the other hand, it is done in respect to the whole subject-matter of the book. The only other difference is, that here, in addition to the prophets, those also are mentioned who keep the words of this book. Bengel: "Much stress must indeed be laid upon the discourses of this book, and on the keeping of it; because those who keep it stand in such a blessed society and brotherhood." The angels are servants of God, in respect to their office, and so also are the prophets. Those, therefore, who keep the words of this book, could not be regarded in any other light than as servants of God in his vineyard. The keeping of the words of this book manifests itself in those, to whom it belongs, especially by their not appearing faint and lifeless in the testimony of Jesus (comp. at ch. xiv. 12); and to have the testimony of Jesus is a calling in the church (comp. at ch. vi. 9, xii. 17.) *Or*, we are to regard those, who keep the words of this book, as annexed to the prophets, so that the angel is only in so far their fellow-servant, as they are comprehended under the prophets as their heads. Even if we should ascribe to them a separate and independent place, they must still not be loosed from their connec-

tion with the prophets. The parallel passages shew, that the pre-eminent dignity of this class is what properly calls forth the declinature.

Ver. 10—12. The book is of great importance. For, its threatenings and promises are drawing near to their fulfilment. He who does not consider it, shall certainly loose salvation, and be unexpectedly overtaken by the threatened plagues. Ver. 10. *And he says to me: Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.* The words, "And he says to me," shews that the discourse of the angel here takes a new beginning. —*Seal not.* It was intimated to Daniel that his prophecy was then, and for a long time to come, to be regarded as a shut and sealed book; and only the church of the future should be able to make a right use of it (comp. at ch. x. 4.) It is otherwise with our prophecy; and the circumstance is well fitted to bring clearly to view its high importance. Its contents are of a kind generally more accessible; for it is occupied with matters which had in the circumstances of the time what was essential to their existence, and which were to have light thrown upon them by their immediately beginning fulfilment. The expression, *the time is near*, holds not merely in respect to the first readers and hearers of the Revelation, but for all time. A large proportion of what is announced in the Revelation is of a kind which has its fulfilment continually repeated anew, and reaches through all history. So, especially, the vision of the seven seals, and the vision of the seven trumpets. But in particular the word, "The time is near," holds in respect to the times, in which the *special* catastrophes announced in the Revelation are ready to break forth. It holds quite peculiarly in respect to our own times, in which the last and the greatest special pre-intimations are proceeding with giant strides toward their accomplishment. So that the declaration of the time being near should be felt by us as a strong recommendation of the Apocalypse to our regard.

Ver. 11. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.* This verse stands in the middle, between the declaration that the time is near, and the announcement, "Behold I come quickly; and its meaning is to be determined by its position.—

Both the two, that the wicked should continue to be wicked, and the righteous to be righteous, is alike agreeable to the will of God. If the second is no mere permission, but a manifestation of will on the part of God, so must it be also in respect to the first. If they will have it so, let it be so; if it is right in their view, so is it also in God's. He will take care that they do not escape from him. If they will not sanctify him, he will sanctify himself upon them; and that not merely in the future world, but also soon in this. For, where the carcase is, there are the eagles gathered together. There is a similar announcement in Ezek. ii. 27, "He that hears, let him hear, and he that forbears, let him forbear."—The righteous stand opposed to those that do injustice, and the holy to the filthy.[1] The nature of sanctification consists in the separation, whereby one keeps one's self undefiled from the world. *To do righteousness,*[2] for *exercising* it, is an expression peculiar to St John (comp. 1 John ii. 29, iii. 7, Gospel iii. 21, where he speaks of doing the truth.) The fundamental passage is Gen. xviii. 19, where doing righteousness appears as the mark of a true descendant of Abraham, and a condition necessary for obtaining the divine blessing (comp. Isa. lvi. 1, lviii. 2; Ps. cvi. 3.)

Ver. 12. *Behold*[3] *I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every one as his work shall be.* On the word, *I come quickly*, comp. ver. 7. The declaration, *My reward is with me*, is taken from Isa. xl. 10, lxii. 11, where *Jehovah* is the speaker. Hence we can apply from 2 John ver. 8, the admonition, "See that we lose not what we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." The reward, as we learn from what follows, comprehends here also the recompense of the wicked. On the words, "to give to every one," &c., comp. Rom. ii. 6, "who shall give to every one according to his works," which is enlarged upon in what follows. *Here* the work simply is mentioned; on which Bengel remarks: "The whole doing of a good or bad man is a single work and business, Matth. xvi. 27."

Ver. 12 lays the foundation for the two declarations in ver.

[1] The noun ῥυπαρία occurs in Jas. i. 21, as denoting *filth* in a moral sense. From that John has formed the verb ῥυπαρεύω, which is found nowhere else.

[2] The reading δικαιωθήτω has been formed merely in imitation of the following word ἁγιασθήτω.

[3] Luther has: *and* behold.

13 and 14. As the beginning belongs to God in Christ, so also does the end; blessed then they who do his commandments, ver. 13, but woe to sinners, ver. 14.—Ver. 13. *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the ending.* The *Omega* and the *ending* are here to be accented (comp. at ch. xxi. 6, i. 8.) We must take heed that we stand well with him, to whom the end belongs. It is a piece of folly to attach one's self to those, who expatiate only for a time in the *middle.* Here also some have sought to decide in regard to the person who speaks what is not decided by John. The speaker here, as in ch. i. 8, is *simply God in the undistinguished unity of his being, or God in Christ.* That Christ is also the Alpha, the beginning, the first, and consequently the Omega, the end, the last, is evident alone from the fact, that he is the Word of God (comp. on ch. xix. 13), the beginning of the creation of God (ch. iii. 14.) But the angel cannot, without some specific intimation, be regarded as speaking now from the person of the Father, and again from the person of the Son; and where he does not speak in his own person, or the speaker is not more definitely described, as at ver. 16, there it can only be God in Christ.

Ver. 14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that their power may be to the tree of life, and to enter by the gates into the city.* The meaning is, blessed *therefore* are they; for the benediction rests on the circumstance, that God in Christ is the Alpha and the Omega. Were it otherwise, they would be the most miserable of men (1 Cor. xv. 19.) To *keep* or to *do* God's commandments, or his will, his law, is a mode of speech peculiarly frequent with St John (ch. xii. 17, xiv. 12; John vii. 19, iv. 34, vi. 38, vii. 17, ix. 31.) Among these commands faith in Jesus is the foremost (comp. at ch. xiv. 12.) A similar benediction pronounced on *doing* is found in John xiii. 17, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." The *his* shows that the angel is speaking here in his own person. Bengel's remark, "*His* is ornately put for *mine;* his, of him who is the Alpha and the Omega," would only be warrantable, if the other supposition were not so natural.—In the words, "that their power may be," &c., the manner in which the blessedness is to be realized is more accurately determined (comp. on ch. xiv. 13.) Bengel; "When Adam broke the command the way to the tree of life was barred;

but they who do the commandments shall have power over the tree of life."—No other entrance can be found into the new Jerusalem, but through the *gates*. Their being so expressly mentioned here, therefore, can only be intended to add vividness to the description. He who travels toward a city in the first instance directs his eye to the gates; and the glory of the gates here referred to, described in ch. xxi. 21, here again comes especially into view. Allusion is, perhaps, made to Ps. cxxii. 1, 2.

Ver. 15. *Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and all who love and do a lie.* In ch. xxi. 8, those whose part is to be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, form four pairs—the four being the signature of the earth—the fearful and unbelieving, the abominable and murderers, whoremongers and sorcerers, idolaters and all liars. In ch. xxi. 27 the enumeration of those, who are excluded from the kingdom of God, is comprised in the number three. *Here* the excluded are *seven*, and the seven is divided by the four and the three; as quite similarly in Isa. i. 4 there are to be found seven designations of sinful and corrupt ways, divided into four and three.—Bengel: "The series is headed by the *dogs*, that is the unholy and impure, who by their rough behaviour show that they are quite unlike the Lamb. In the language of the world the rabble are called by way of contempt, *canaille*, that is, dog. They who familiarly use such words should take heed that they are not themselves reckoned to be such by Christ." The dog is in Scripture "the symbol of the disgustingly impure, the shameless, those who are altogether deserving of contempt." It was in a manner consecrated to this use by the Mosaic law. The chief quality that here comes into view is impurity; comp. Prov. xxvi. 11, "as a dog that returns to his vomit," 2 Pet. ii. 22; Matt. vii. 6. Still we must not stand simply at that. The base dog-like spirit (comp. Phil. iii. 2) manifests itself also in another manner; for example, in wrath and biting (comp. Ps. xxii. 16; Matt. vii. 6.) That the latter is here also taken into account, appears to be indicated by the juxtaposition of sorcerers with dogs, who, according to the parallel passages, are brought here into notice as persons who seek to hurt their neighbour secretly. Otherwise, we might seek the point of comparison in the disgusting character of their dispositions. Several have wished to

understand by the dogs "the effeminate, and abusers of themselves with mankind," of 1 Cor. vi. 9. But however certainly these occupy one of the first places among the dogs, we still cannot think of their being specially and exclusively meant. They would require to have been more specifically described. In Deut. xxiii. 18 also, to which reference is sometimes made, the dog by itself is only a designation of *base and disgusting filthiness;* it is the *genus* for the species of abominations mentioned in ver. 17. It is this latter verse alone that supplies the more definite meaning.—*Whoremongers* are here associated with *murderers* as adulterers are in the law of Moses. In ch. xxi. 8 whoremongery is considered under the aspect of an injury done to a neighbour. Bengel: "Whoremongery is now almost less thought of in Christendom than it was among the heathen; but here whoremongers stand between sorcerers and murderers; so that they may easily understand what their recompense shall be."—Idolaters here also are the *kind*, liars the *species*—comp. at ch. xxii. 8. The *doing* a lie stands opposed to *doing the truth* in John iii. 21.—Bossuet, "I am not sure if any portion of Scripture can be found in which terrors and consolations are better intermingled together, than they are in these last chapters. There is everything to attract in this most blessed city; all in it is rich and glorious; but every thing also is fitted to inspire one with dread; for we perceive still more there of purity than of grandeur."

Ver. 16. *I Jesus have sent my angel to testify these things to you upon*[1] *the churches. I am the root and the race of David, the bright morning-star.* Behind John, the poor instrument, stands a greater than he, whose shoes he is not worthy to loose. The subject-matter of the book ascends through the medium of the angel to Jesus. Whosoever apprehends his glory (I am the root, &c.), cannot doubt the truth of its contents; he will expect with firm confidence the fulfilment of its promises. The *these things* refer to the whole contents of the book. *To you*, my servants, who are represented by John, the prophets (comp. on ch. xxii. 6, 9, i. 1.) *To testify*, not that he, but that I may testify, comp. i. 2. *Upon* the churches (the ἐπὶ as in ch. x. 11;

1 The ἐπὶ was a source of perplexity to those who did not rightly understand the ὑμῖν. They hence either dropt it out, or substituted ἐν in its place.

John xii. 16), the churches being regarded as the *object* of the testimony. The whole book is occupied with the future affairs of the church. The churches are the Christian churches generally, not merely the seven of Asia; for to these only the seven epistles specially belonged (comp. i. p. 57.) Even in these epistles the promises do not respect alone the seven churches, but the churches generally. The book closes in ver. 21 with the words, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with *all saints*."—The *root* of David, as in ch. v. 5, is the *product* of the root, the sprout from the root, that in which the family of David, that had sunk into the lowest depression, again bloomed forth. Because Jesus is the root, he is also the *race* of David. *In him alone is the race preserved;* while otherwise it would have vanished without a trace. The race of David is more than his offspring; it indicates that the race of David should, save for Christ, have ceased to exist. The race of David is here brought into view in respect to the unconquerable strength and everlasting dominion promised it by God, (comp. Luke i. 32, 33.) What he testifies, in whom the glorious race of David culminates, will assuredly go into fulfilment.—Jesus is called the *bright morning-star* in allusion to Isa. xiv. 12, on account of his glorious dominion; comp. on ch. ii. 28. The practical result of the verse is this: You must, therefore, firmly believe what in this book is said of my coming, of the water of life, etc. For, the saying, "whatever he has promised, he holds sacred," stands good with respect to me; I shall not feed my people with empty hopes.

Ver. 17. *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And he that hears, let him say, Come! And he that is athirst let him come; he that wills, let him take the water of life freely.* What the book contains of the coming of the Lord, etc. is certain, ver. 16. And, therefore, the joyful echo of the Spirit responds here to the word of Christ: Come! And this, again, is immediately followed by the call of the Spirit to every one, who hears the come, to accord with it, and by the invitation to the thirsty to participate in the enjoyment of the promised salvation.—The *Spirit* is not the Spirit that dwells in all believers (Rom. viii. 26), but the Spirit of prophecy (ch. xix. 10), the Spirit of the prophets (ch. xxii. 6), in which John was on the Lord's day (ch. i. 10, iv. 2), which also speaks through

John in ch. xiv. 13, and which utters the promises in the seven epistles. The *bride, i.e.* the church (comp. xix. 7, xxi. 2, 9), stands related here to the church, as elsewhere the *saints* to the *prophets*—comp. at ch. xviii. 20, "The saints are the genus, the apostles and prophets, who are personally identical, are the most distinguished species of these," ch. xi. 18, xvi. 6, xvii. 6, xviii. 24. There is no change of person here as to the Come uttered by the Spirit, and the Come uttered by the bride, but the Spirit himself, and John his organ, proclaims the Come as the bride's representative. This Come uttered by the organ of the church in her name is a *fact*—she *speaks*—and on it follows the call to all the members of the church, to accord with this Come.—*He that hears*—not generally the words of the prophecy of this book, by comparing ver. 18 and i. 3, for had this been the thing to be heard, it would have required to be more specially described—but the Come of the Spirit and the bride. Bengel: "He that has so much joy as to be able to say, Come, let him say it. And he that still cannot, let him learn to do so. The power of the whole gospel concentrates itself in this, that one should be able to respond to this Come, and repeat it from the heart." On the words, "And he that is athirst let him come," comp. John viii. 37, "If any one thirsts, let him come to me and drink," and the remarks made at ch. xxi. 6. If the contents of this book really belong to the true and faithful witness, the thristy need but to come; such simply as have the *will*, may receive the water of life. For now all is ready.

Ver. 18. *I testify to every one, who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If any one adds thereto, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book.* Ver. 19. *And if any one take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life, and from the holy city, which are written in this book.*—The natural man must, as in Scripture generally, so especially in the Revelation, *not* find much that he would find, and, again, find much that he would not. This simply arises from its being a testimony of the Spirit of God. Hence comes the disposition to make additions and omissions. Such adders and *omitters* are here meant, as those who said, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. iii. 4); or, "Let him make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it" (Isa. v. 19); or those who maintained, that it was unprofitable

to remain faithful unto death (ch. ii. 10), or, that people should freely eat of things sacrificed to idols, and commit fornication (ch. ii. 10.) That such additions and omissions are here referred to, as belong to the proper kernel of the book, such as would substitute for the *narrow* way presented in it a *broad* one, or would in some respect extinguish the light of hope, that shines in it for Christians, as was done by Hymenëus and Philetus, who said that the resurrection was past already (2 Tim. ii. 17); this will not be for a moment doubted by any one, who has discerned the spirit of this book. It is also confirmed by the parallel passages of the Old Testament. It is said in Deut. iv. 2, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you;" and an example is given in ver. 16—19, where they are warned against a seduction to the worship of images and the host of heaven. Deut. xii. 32, "Whatsoever thing I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it," stands connected with a warning against total apostacy, against a participation in the idolatry of the Canaanites, and mixing it up with the service of Jehovah. In Prov. xxx. 5, 6, "Every word of God is purified, he is a shield to those who trust in him. (But) *add not thou* to his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar," such additions to the promises of God (for these are more especially referred to) are meant, as when, after the manner of Satan in Matth. iv. 6, the protection, which God has promised to his people, so long as they walk in *his* way, is applied to those, who would strike out a way of *their own*—additions, therefore, which are based on a moral perversion. That there were persons in the Christian church disposed to make additions and omissions of the kind referred to, even at the time when the Revelation was seen, is abundantly clear from the seven epistles. Balaam and Jezebel had then revived again. The smuggling of heathenism into the church of God was pressed with great zeal, and in part also with prosperous success (see at ch. ii. 6.) In times of persecution and oppression, such as that in which the Apocalypse was written, there is a peculiar temptation to such additions and omissions. Whoever surrendered himself unconditionally to the truths set forth in this book, put himself in direct opposition to heathenism, and drew upon himself

its persecuting violence. And any one that wanted the spirit of martyrdom, *must* add or take away. There was therefore sufficient reason for such an earnest threatening as is here uttered. The fear of *man* which always evokes the latitudinarian spirit, could only be expelled by the fear of *God*. Even still the dominion of the world carries along with it a powerful incentive to the adding and taking away. One plies every effort to take off the edge from the word of God, and to strike a shameful agreement with the world. Proofs enough of this are not wanting unfortunately even in the province of "a theology of faith." Nor would the opposition that is raised against the composition of the Apocalypse by St John have been so resolute, if a horror had not been felt for the solemn earnest that appears in its witness-bearing, and had it not been perceived, that to yield one's self unconditionally to it requires one to break unconditionally with the world. The offence which Luther took at these words, and expressed in his preface to the Revelation, proceeded only from a misunderstanding of the proper import. When they are correctly understood, none can take offence at them but those who regard the title, Revelation of Jesus Christ, as a mere assumption. The idea contained in them is simply this: As men deal with the word of God, so does God deal with them, and justly so, ch. iii. 10. Quite similar is Gal. i. 8, 9, which passage may serve as a commentary. It is not accidental, that the warning occurs toward the close of the *first*, and toward the close of the *last* book of the canon, whose author clearly perceived that it was given him to shut up the canon; as little as it is accidental that *paradise* meets us at the beginning of Scripture, and at the end the *new Jerusalem*. The warning uttered in the first and the last book substantially applies to all, that lies between the two.—In the word, "God will add," the divine recompense is brought clearly to view by the similarity of the expression: "He that adds, shall have plagues added to him, he that takes away, from him shall blessings be taken away." The two go inseparably together—on the one side the experience of the plagues and the loss of salvation, and on the other, deliverance from the plagues and the inheritance of salvation. The plagues, which are written in this book, are such as were to befal the ungodly world; and he who is to have these laid

on him as a burden, must have previously made himself chargeable with the world's guilt. By his profane rashness in adding, the offspring of his carnal state of mind, he shews that he has belonged to the world, and not to the church; and hence must be at last condemned with the world, and not preserved with the church. — By the word *part* the destiny and inheritance are denoted (comp. John xiii. 8.) This was hitherto *beside* the tree of life, and *in* the holy city. But now it shall be taken away from both, and he receives instead his part in the lake of fire, which burns with fire and brimstone (ch. xxi. 8.) In regard to the tree of life and the holy city, Bengel remarks: "These two are mentioned also at ver. 14, and in these two stands the sum of the blessedness written at the beginning and at the close of the book, ch. ii. 7, iii. 12, xxi. 2, xxii. 2." The words, "who are written in this book," refer to the tree of life and the holy city, as also the plagues standing over against them are described as being written in this book.

In ver. 20 we have the parting words of Jesus and John. In ver. 21 the latter dismisses his hearers.

Ver. 20. *He who testifies these things says: Yea, I come quickly. Amen, come Lord Jesus.* He who testifies these things is *Christ* (comp. at ch. i. 2, 5.) The "Amen, come Lord Jesus," is spoken by the Spirit through Jesus, or by John in the Spirit. The "I come quickly," is the sum of the prophetic announcements of the book. That the church with full confidence may say the Amen, come Lord Jesus, is the great practical design of this book. Where this design is accomplished, there all tribulation, anxiety, and pain are overcome, and there fidelity shall be found to be invincible. Bengel, "The expression *these things* refers to the whole book, vers. 6, 18; John xxi. 24, 'This is the disciple who testifies of *these things*.'"

Ver. 21. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all saints.* The variations in the text have arisen from a comparison of the forms of salutation used by Paul at the close of his epistles; which was the more natural, as John himself undoubtedly had respect to these Pauline salutations (comp. at ch. i. 4.) The reading followed by Luther: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," agrees literally with the conclusion of the epistle to the Romans. The "with all," which Tischendorf has admitted

into the text, suits as little as the "with *you* all." The circle of readers was not definitely enough marked by it. It must at the close be once more distinctly expressed, that the book is the property of the whole Christian church on earth, that all who belong to the number of saints are warranted and bound to seek in it their edification, and must give an account how they have used the means of salvation it provided. When it shall be said, Give an account of thy stewardship, the word here "with *all* saints" will also come to be mentioned.

RETROSPECT.

The starting-point of the book is given in ch. i. 9. St John, who is on the isle of Patmos for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, writes to his companions in tribulation.

The great burden of the contents stands in a close and manifest reference to this occasion; nay, a careful examination shews that this reference is *never* wanting; that every thing in the book is adapted to serve as the means of consolation and support to the church in the conflict which she has to wage with heathenism and its invisible head.

But, on the other hand, there are very important reasons for holding that the Apocalypse was intended to disclose the future generally, and not merely under one particular aspect; that the older view, which held it to be a prophetical history of the church in its chief epochs even to the consummation, has truth at bottom, and only erred in not distinguishing between the general and the special parts of the Apocalypse, and in forcing its historical interpretations on the two groups of the seven seals and the seven trumpets. It erred, further, in determining the chief epochs by its own conceptions of things, and interpreting the Apocalypse from its own historical position, instead of going with true resignation to obtain from the book itself the rules that should be followed.

The Revelation is the book by which the Lord verified his promise in John xvi. 13, that he would make known the future to his disciples. It is the prophecy of the New Testament. We have no other prophetical book in the canon. According to ch. i. 1, it is intended to shew generally what should come to pass. Its object, according to ch. i. 7, is the whole coming of the Lord with clouds, his judicial agency in its continued exercise

through a series of centuries. It stretches in uninterrupted progress from the time of the Seer to the new Jerusalem. Nor does it merely direct the eye on the external fortunes, but also on the internal condition of the church.

The bond of union between the two objects is this, that from the time of the apostle till the end of the world the conflict with heathenism is of the most decided moment for the church; from thence have come both its heaviest outward defeats, and its most severe inward temptations; in connection with that also have its most glorious victories been won.

It confirms the soundness of this solution, that in the Apocalypse heathenism is expressly represented as the proper organ and the chief instrument of Satan. According to ch. xii. 3, Satan bears seven heads and ten horns in reflection of his visible image and deputy on earth, the beast, the heathen worldly power. With the overthrow of heathenism also was Satan's power first broken, and during the thousand years at last completely vanquished.

If this is the proper mode of contemplating the "Revelation of Jesus Christ," many will certainly need to reform their views respecting it; but in the present times the necessity for this presses on them from another point of view.

As the right determination of the thousand years' reign opposes the exaggerated representations set forth in the controversies between Catholics and Protestants, so also does the circumstance, which goes hand in hand with it, that the Revelation knows nothing of this contrast. That it is, most certainly, a matter of *great moment*, is not thereby disproved; but it cannot be the properly *capital* point. Experience also accords with this. How did the Reformers find the church, and how have we found it after it has been inundated with Rationalism? The conflict with unbelief deadens, the conflict with Catholicism refreshes. An impartial historical survey presents the result, that both churches are necessary to each other.

But it is of importance to discern more closely wherein the Revelation places the nature of heathenism. De Wette is of opinion, p. 7, "that the writer regarded as the capital enemy of the Christian church the worship of idols, which was supported

by the Roman monarchy, and maintained in force by the arts of priests and of conjurors." Were it so, the author must have judged very superficially of his own times; for it is perfectly certain, that when the Apocalypse was composed, what is commonly called idolatry did not form the substance of heathenism; so that, if the author had conceived it to be so, he must have judged erringly respecting the future. In ch. ix. 20, idolatry is, indeed, taken notice of, but it occupies throughout only a subordinate position. Wherein the author places the really essential element of heathenism, is manifest alone from the name of BEAST, which indicates a want of the living breath of God, the spiritual nature—betokens what is low and fleshly (comp. at ch. xiii. 1.) In close union with this fleshliness goes the *determined character of its hatred toward God, the open and uncompromising nature of its contrariety to Christ and his church* (comp. at ch. xx. 2), the *impiety*, which breaks forth in the utterance of great things and blasphemies (ch. xiii. 5), and exclaims, Who is like the beast? and who can make war with him?—words and utterances, in which the beast, not for his idols, which even in the times of their unbroken dominion were still always the mere fabrication of their worshippers, but for himself claims the highest dignity and greatness.

The prophetic foresight of the Apocalypse stretches far beyond the period of its composition. It depicts in sharp outlines a series of situations similar to those then existing, and extending even to the final consummation. This also implies, that the author only *primarily*, but not exclusively kept in view the readers and hearers of his own day. With the clear apprehension of the future there is closely bound up a fellow-feeling in respect to it to the church of all times. He, who has had laid open to his view the distresses and sorrows of the future, must also be conscious of an earnest desire to provide for them advice and consolation. Had he looked merely to the first readers, he would never have thought of going so much into detail in announcing the future, or of communicating so much, which could only be fully understood after the fulfilment had taken place. The deep conviction, also, he had respecting the high importance of the book, and which he has expressed in the book itself, shews, that it could not have been intended merely for his own times. It is

the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him (ch. i. 1.) The position, which every individual takes up in regard to its subject-matter, determines his salvation or perdition (ch. xxii. 19.) Inspiration in the full sense excludes all limitation in respect to time and place.

That the aim of the book is a thoroughly *practical* one, is indicated even in the introduction. Ch. i. 3 pronounces him blessed, who reads and who hears the words of the prophecy, and who *keeps those things that are written in it.* According to ch. xiii. 9, 10, xiv. 12, "Here is the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus," it was designed to strengthen believers in patience, and consequently in maintaining faith toward Christ and obedience to God's commandments; "the fearful and the unbelieving" (ch. xxi. 8), who had made shipwreck of patience and faith, being incapable of coming again to the possession of true zeal.

In the Gospel of John it is said, ch. xx. 31, at the close of the main part of the narrative, "But these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name." As, therefore, the aim of the Gospel is to lead to faith and thereby to patience, so the aim of the Apocalypse is to meet the *dangers*, which threaten faith and consequently the life of the soul. It sends forth the injunction to *overcome* (ch. xxi. 7.)

The means, which the Apocalypse puts in motion with a view to the accomplishment of this aim, the springs of strength and consolation which it opens up, are manifold. With the clearness of intuition, with a power, a confidence, and a fulness that at once overmasters and fills the mind and fancy, it represents how God avenges his people on a persecuting world, how he conducts them through all persecutions, so that their faith does not expire, their fidelity remains unmoved (ch. xiv. 1—5); how he stretches over them his protecting hand amid the judgments which he causes to alight on the world (ch. vii. 1—8); how he receives them up to his heavenly glory (ch. vii. 9—17); how he brings his church to a provisional ascendancy upon earth (the thousand years' reign); how, finally, he erects the new heavens and the new earth, and causes the new Jerusalem to come down out of heaven upon earth. Besides, it couples with this an affecting description of

the dangers and punishments which await apostacy and unbelief, and points to the dreadful lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

It needs scarcely be remarked, that the practical aim of the book in no way prejudices its strictly prophetical character. It is this very character which fits it for consoling and animating the minds of believers in the most effectual manner, since the author had the seal of the future broken for him.

We shall now give a brief recapitulation of the contents of the book.

The introduction in ch. i. 1—3 points to the high importance of the book, in which St John, the tried and faithful servant of God, only acts as the servant and organ of God and Jesus Christ. It also gives an indication of the subject of the book, which was to shew what must shortly come to pass. It is to be the book of the future of the kingdom of God. And in pronouncing those blessed who read and hear what is written in it, its practical character is made known, as being throughout intended to promote what concerns the divine life.

The introduction is followed by what constitutes the main body of the book, consisting of seven groups, the seven divided by three and four—three preparatory groups, and four which are designed to shew in detail what is to come to pass.

The division of the groups has been sufficiently justified already. Here we shall merely say farther, that the opposite view, according even to the admission of its own supporters, is destitute of all analogy. Thus De Wette says, "The Apocalypse is the only prophetical book which is executed on the plan of a progressive and continually expanding whole. The book of Daniel, too, has a plan, and forms a whole; but it is so constructed, that one and the same thing returns again in different ways, and presents itself more and more distinctly to the eye of the reader." It is much the same also with the emblematical portion of Zechariah (ch. i. 7, vi. 15), which, after Daniel, is most closely related to the Apocalypse. It consists of a series of independent visions, which were all communicated in one night, and by supplementing one another form together a complete image of the future fortunes of the people of God.

The first group is that of the *seven epistles*, ch. i. 4—iii. 22.

It unfolds the practical obligations that grow out of the near approach of the Lord, which it is the business of the following groups to place distinctly in view; as if in anticipation of the question, "How shall I receive, and how shall I meet thee?" We have merely exemplified in the case of the seven churches of Asia what is substantially said for the benefit of the church in all ages. The group falls into three parts. First, the introduction, which after the salutation in ch. i. 4—6, delivers two pregnant consolatory declarations, ver. 7, 8. Then, in ver. 9—20, follows the account of Christ's appearance, in which John, after indicating the historical starting-point (ver. 9), receives the charge to write to the seven churches. The third part is made up of the seven epistles themselves. The substance of the communications contained in them was already prepared by the appearance of the Lord, which bears a double character—one threatening and another consolatory—so that the epistles only form a commentary on the appearance.

Next come two groups, the theme of which was unfolded in ch. viii. 3—5 thus: God will hear the fervent prayers of his struggling and suffering church, and cause his judgments to alight on the world. All here possesses a general, preparatory character. The *ungodly world*, the earth lifting itself up in rebellion against heaven, appears as the object of the divine judgments. No trace is to be found of Rome or of any other particular worldly power. The judgments themselves are destitute of every individual mark. They are such as continually return in the course of history, as often as earth lifts itself up against its Creator. The necessity for these general groups is grounded in the circumstance, that John does not prophecy for the present alone, but for the wants of the church in all ages. From the special part we see, that the resistance of the world to the kingdom of God, which formed the immediate occasion of the Revelation being given, was not to be the last. The Roman opposition was to be followed by that of the ten kings. And still further on, after Christ's thousand years' reign, there was to arise the great conflict of Gog and Magog. Each of these three great divisions of opposing forces falls again into a series of particular acts. The manifestations of God's penal justice, which each time tread closely on the assault of the adversary, must have much in *common;* and this common

ground is represented in our two groups—the specific character of which is to be kept apart from all that is individual—before the particular kinds of opposition, in their separate characteristics, and God's judicial operations in regard to them, come to be spoken of. It is of vast importance for a right explanation of these two groups, and for an edifying application of them, that we should have a clear and distinct perception of this their general and preparatory character.

First, we have the group of the *seven seals* in ch. iv. 1—viii. 1. The arrangement is this: The holy assembly sitting in judgment in ch. iv., the giving up of the book with seven seals to Christ in ch. v., the opening of the seals of the book, and the making manifest of the judgments therein contained in ch. vi. and ch. viii. 1. Intermediately, in ch. vii. there is an episode, shewing how God preserves his people in the midst of the judicial visitations, and how he helps them to attain to his heavenly kingdom.

In what forms the main burden of the group—ch. vi., and viii. 1—the church, harassed by the persecutions of the world, has the image of her heavenly king placed before her eyes, as he visits the persecuting world with bloodshed, scarcity, famine, pestilence; as he brings upon it the most alarming circumstances, makes all forebode the entire destruction of everything that concerns it, and at last (ch. viii. 1) subjects it to the annihilating stroke of ruin.

Then follows the group of *the seven trumpets*, ch. viii. 2—xi. 19. The section ch. viii. 3—5 stands by itself as a prelude, indicating the point of view out of which *this* group, as also the *preceding* one, with which it is united into a pair, ought to be contemplated; and ch. x. 1—xi. 13, forms an episode. In the main part the plague of war is represented under a series of symbols, as that by which God continually during the course of ages chastises anew the heathenish opposition that is made to his kingdom. Among the scourges of God this is the most frightful. On that account a separate group is here devoted to it, although war had already occurred in the preceding group in due place and order among the other plagues.

In the episode the Seer's glance is directed from the world to the church. As a sort of enclosure, appended to the last verse of ch. ix., it furnishes an answer to the question: How does the

church stand in reference to the corrupt world that lies in wickedness, and continues incorrigible under the heaviest visitations of divine judgment? It presents an antidote to the doubt that was apt to arise respecting the completion of the church, from a consideration of her sinfulness, her proneness to fall in with the corruption of the world, by giving the assurance that a reaction in the church should certainly arise against the inevitable tendency to apostatise, and that the judgment which must necessarily alight upon the church on account of her backsliding, should be no annihilating one, but should only prepare the way for grace to operate.

The representation of these consolatory truths could only be given within the preparatory groups. For the temptation which they meet is not confined to a single period, but one constantly recurring. In all epochs in which the corruption of the world has risen to a great height, it has never failed to exercise a disastrous influence on the church. As often as iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold; and as this grows, there constantly grows also in those who have remained stedfast, a tendency to doubt respecting the completion of the church, and their dearest hopes threaten to vanish from their grasp.

Such, then, is the chief burden of the three groups of the first part. The first group of the second part is that of *the three enemies of God's kingdom*, ch. xii.—xiv. Of these enemies we are, in the first instance, presented with a vivid portraiture—Satan in ch. xii., the beast from the sea, the God-opposing worldly power, with seven horns denoting its seven phases, in ch. xii. 18, xiii. 10, the beast from the earth, earthly, physical, demoniacal wisdom, in ch. xiii. 11—18. Then in ch. xiv., believers, who are assailed by these enemies, leagued together in close fellowship, have consolation ministered to them, by the view that is unfolded of the immoveable condition of those who stand in the grace of God, and the judgments that were ready to befal the enemies. But this ministration of comfort bears entirely the character of a general and preliminary representation, and points forwards to another group, in which a more particular delineation was to be given of the victory of Christ. *The kernel of this group is manifestly the description of the enemies.* The church must learn from it the whole magnitude of her danger, so that she may take to

herself her complete armour, may cry from her inmost soul, Lord have mercy on me, and after having won the victory, may with heart, mouth, and hands give thanks to her divine helper.

The fifth group, that of the *seven vials* in ch. xv., xvi., unfolds the seven plagues, which during the course of centuries accompany the beast, the ungodly power of the world (the second and third groups had to do only with the corrupt *world*); and they form the prelude to the sixth, ch. xvii.—xx., which represents the *destruction of the three enemies of God's kingdom.* This last begins with the beast, the worldly power, and ascends upwards to Satan. Of the seven heads of the beast, five, according to ch. xvii. 10, had fallen before the prophet's own time, the Egyptian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Medo-Persian, Grecian monarchies. In the prophet's time the church was oppressed through the medium of the *sixth* head, the monarchy of Rome. Ch. xvii. announces the overthrow of this. In ch. xviii. we have a pictorial representation of it. In ch. xix. 1—4 it is celebrated by a song of praise. The counterpart is made up of the anticipatory celebration of the victory over all the other enemies in ver. 5—10. By these two songs of praise the group is divided into two halves. In ch. xix. 11—21 is related the victory of Christ over the ten kings, who were the instruments of his judgment on Rome, the seventh head of the beast with ten horns. With this as the last phase of the heathen world power, the beast himself also, the state of heathendom perishes, and with him, too, his assistant, the beast from the earth. Ch. xx. 1—6 represents, how the third enemy, Satan, is rendered for a time harmless, and how there breaks in upon the church a reign of a thousand years. It has been asked, why this period of a thousand years might not be regarded as one that was frequently to be repeated. The answer is found, as soon as the distinction is perceived between the special part of the Apocalypse and its preparatory groups, which are of a general nature. From beginning to end this sixth group has a chronological development. We are also to reject the conclusion that is drawn from the symbolical character of the other numbers of the Apocalypse to the same in the thousand years. The sixfold repetition of the thousand number alone shews, that it is meant to be taken in good earnest. Besides, the number ten and what proceeds from it commonly, indeed, bears the character of a round number in

Scripture (and the thousand is here also to be regarded as such), but never the character of a symbolical one. The final destruction of Satan is represented in ch. xx. 7—10. After the complete overthrow of the three enemies, there still follows the final judgment on their servants coupled with the removal of the present constitution of the world, as now required by the extirpation of sin, in ch. xx. 11—15.

The seventh group forms the conclusion of the main portion of the book, and contains the description of the *new Jerusalem*, ch. xxi. 1—xxii. 5.

The conclusion of the book, in ch. xxii. 6—21, which corresponds to the beginning, points to its high importance, and once more brings out its fundamental truth.

INQUIRY REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THE APOCALYPSE.

EVIDENCE IN THE APOCALYPSE ITSELF FOR ITS BEING AN APOSTOLICAL PRODUCTION.

That no other than the apostle John is the author of the Apocalypse, is in a manifold variety of ways attested by the book itself.

The author calls himself in ch. i. 1, 4, 9, xxii. 8, John, without any further addition.—We shewed, at ch. i. 1, that by the servant of God there called John we could only understand the apostle, as being the only person of that name within the sphere, for which the Apocalypse was more immediately destined, who held so pre-eminent a place, that all would immediately think of him.[1] History knows of no other John of that time and district, who held an important position in the church;[2] nor could any one possibly exist, who did not stand far below the apostle, and who would not have reckoned it necessary to designate himself more particularly, to prevent his being confounded with the other. That

1 Twells vindic. Apoc. in Wolf's curis p. 397: "So, that Cicero did this or that, or declared so and so to his readers, it is manifest who would be meant: we should at once understand, that it was the orator of that name, and not Quintus Cicero, his brother, or Marcus, his son."

2 Credner thinks he has found in the so-called presbyter John, a person who was of high estimation in the circle of the seven Asiatic churches. Besides the common reasons for the existence of this shadow of a man, a passage has been produced from the Apost. Const. VII. 46, which was attributed to that presbyter John, both by Cotelerius and Rothe: *περὶ δὲ τῶν ὑφ' ἡμῶν* (the apostles) *χειροτονηθέντων ἐπισκόπων ἐν τῇ ζωῇ τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ γνωρίζομεν ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰσὶν οὗτοι . . τῆς δὲ Ἐφέσου Τιμόθεος μὲν ὑπὸ Παύλου, Ἰωάννης δὲ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ Ἰωάννου.* But how should the presbyter be here all at once changed into a bishop? It is rather the apostle himself that is meant. He is also elsewhere spoken of as Timothy's successor—see Cotelerius. The position of John in Asia Minor had much resemblance to that of a later bishop. Other apostles also, in particular James and Jude, are sometimes called bishops:

only the apostle John could have so emphatically used his name in ch. xxii. 8, and presented it as a pledge for the truth of what is written in the book, has already been noted at the passage.

That John so frequently puts merely his proper name, and does not call himself expressly *the* apostle of that name, perfectly agrees with his manner, as otherwise manifested, which has its foundation in his predilection for the enigmatical. Baur has remarked respecting the Gospel, p. 379, "His Gospel must be regarded as accordant with the manner of John; but it must not bear on its front the name of the apostle; at least the author himself would not once give utterance to this name, in order to take it to himself; but the reader must merely be led to draw this conclusion for himself." Baur has paid the opponents of the Apocalypse, who still maintain the genuineness of the Gospel, with their own coin. The evangelist's method of designating himself, in a sort of indirect and covert manner, has been misemployed by him to prove that the author of the Gospel did not really wish to be regarded as the apostle John. In the second and third epistles John conceals himself under the name of the *elder*, through which many have been led to view these also as not his productions. In the Apocalypse the proper name could not be omitted, as it is the constant practice in prophecy to introduce it. And the predilection for the enigmatical must here satisfy itself with simply omitting to mention expressly his apostolical dignity. In regard to others also John has observed the same manner. Not less than twenty times has he mentioned the forerunner of our Lord, yet not once has he applied to him the surname of the Baptist, which is currently used by the other evangelists. He leaves his readers to infer, that John the Baptist is meant, from what is recorded of him.

In ch. i. 4 we are led to think of John the apostle from the John there mentioned writing to the seven churches of Asia; as much as, to *his* seven churches. It was in that very region that the apostle John had a diocese, which consisted of an entire circuit of churches.—It was also shewn, in our remarks on that passage, that only one who possessed the whole fulness of the prophetico-apostolical authority could write to the churches as he has done in these seven epistles.

The John who wrote the Apocalypse is, according to ch. i. 9,

the same that, for his fidelity to the truth of Christ, was banished to the island of Patmos. The accredited tradition of the church testifies this of the apostle John.

The series of the seven epistles begins with Ephesus, where, according to the tradition of the church, John had his seat.

The John of the Apocalypse attributes to himself a high angel-like dignity, ch. xix. 10, xxii. 9. The spirit of prophecy rests upon him, and indeed in so eminent a measure, that he can regard himself as the microcosm of the church (comp. at ch. xxii. 17.) In the introduction, ch. i. 1—3, and in the conclusion, ch. xxii. 6, sq., he alludes in the most express terms to the high importance of his book. This allusion culminates in ch. xxii. 18, 19, which unconditionally claims for the book the authority of the word of God. The apostleship could not be apostleship, it could not have the importance that is so distinctly attached to it in this book itself (ch. xxi. 14), if one, who was not an apostle, could assume to himself so high a position; if a book of such vast moment for the whole Christian church could have been written by any one but an apostle. The allusions in question to the high dignity of the author, and the high importance of the book, are an evidence, that the John of the book could be no other than the apostle. It was pointed out at ch. i. 1 (comp at ch. xviii. 20), that New Testament prophecy stands in a close connection with the apostolical office; so that a prophecy of so much importance as the one contained in this book could only proceed from the circle of the apostles, nay only form one who, among the apostles themselves, stood in the first rank.

The opponents of the apostolical authorship have only to place against these important and numerous proofs two passages, which they think decisive against the apostle John. The first is ch. xviii. 20, where the apostles are represented as already in heaven, therefore as departed out of this life and glorified. The other is ch. xxi. 14, where, it is thought, the apostle could not have spoken so high of the apostles, if he had himself belonged to their number. But we have already shown in our exposition of these passages, that they are not at all of a kind to invalidate the testimony contained in the others. It has been said by Kolthoff, in regard to ch. xviii. 20, that the *saints* and *prophets* named along with the apostles were all dead. The reverse is self-

evident as regards the saints; and for the prophets, the author reckons himself among their number. Further, according to the view of our opponents, the book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. But St John was certainly still in life then; and how could our opponents take the passages in a sense which should imply, that he had already departed this life, like all the other apostles?

In the testimony furnished by the Apocalypse itself we have obtained a solid foundation for our inquiry respecting its author. If the historical tradition and the internal grounds do not speak decidely against John as the author, we must hold him to be the author; the more so, as, after the statements now advanced, we are unavoidably shut up to the alternative, that it is either *the production of John or of an arrant impostor*. But the sound feeling of all, who have looked with any care into the Apocalypse, must revolt against this latter supposition. If, however, the historical tradition and the internal grounds are such as rather to confirm the testimony regarding its composition by the apostle John, then the *inclination* and the *misunderstanding*, which have given it the lie, ought to feel thoroughly ashamed.

We shall first examine the *external* testimonies. And here we presently meet with an imposing array of proofs of the genuineness of the book.

POLYCARP.

Lücke says, "As regards Polycarp, we find neither in his epistle to the Philippians, nor in that to the church of Smyrna respecting the martyrdom of its bishop, the slightest trace of the Apocalypse." But in opposition to this statement, we must affirm, that in both documents there are many, and in part also very distinct traces.

Such a trace immediately presents itself in the salutation to the Philippians, "Mercy to you and peace from God the Almighty,"[1] etc. The whole salutation is made up of expressions found in the New Testament. The name of God, *the Almighty*, may be said

[1] Ἔλεος ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη παρὰ θεοῦ παντοκράτορος.

to have its proper domestication in the Apocalypse. It occurs elsewhere only *once*, in 2 Cor. vi. 18, and indeed not even there in an independent form, but in an Old Testament citation, (comp. at ch. i. 8.)

In ch. 8 it is said, "Let us therefore be imitators of his patience."[1] St John in the Revelation writes of the "companions of the patience of Jesus Christ."

But the chief passage, which justifies us in paying regard even to the slighter indications, is contained in ch. 6. We have there as good as an express quotation of the Apocalypse as a portion of divine Scripture. "Let us therefore serve him with fear and all reverence, as he himself has commanded us, and the apostles who have preached the gospel to you, and the prophets, who have announced beforehand the coming of our Lord."[2] There can be no doubt, that the prophets meant here are those of the New Testament. This appears from the circumstance, of their being placed in the third rank, after the Lord and his apostles; from a comparison of ch. xviii. 20, and Eph. ii. 20, where in like manner the prophets following the apostles are those of the New Testament; and finally from the subject of the announcement, the coming of Jesus Christ. That the prophets, although named beside the apostles, are still not personally different from them, that rather the gift of prophecy rose to its highest form in the bearers of the apostleship, is clear from what was stated at ch. i. 1, xviii. 20. John himself appears in the Apocalypse as the representative of the prophets (comp. at ch. i. 1, xxii. 6, 9, 16, "I Jesus have sent my angel to testify these things to you upon the churches," to you, that is, my servants, the prophets, represented in John.) The prophets in Polycarp could only be mentioned in connection with some representative generally known and recognized in the church. But excepting John in the Apocalypse there is none such to be found. Such manifestations as occur elsewhere of the prophetic gift, are of too straggling a nature. They need a centre wherewith to connect themselves. The important place which is here accorded to the prophets, points to

[1] Μιμηταὶ οὖν γενώμεθα τῆς ὑπομονῆς αὐτοῦ.

[2] Οὕτως οὖν δουλεύσωμεν αὐτῷ μετὰ φόβου καὶ πάσης εὐλαβείας, καθὼς αὐτὸς ἐνετείλατο, καὶ οἱ εὐαγγελισάμενοι ὑμᾶς ἀπόστολοι, καὶ οἱ προφῆται οἱ προκηρύξαντες τὴν ἔλευσιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

a comprehensive prophetical book, in which the moral spirit of counsel and admonition is energetically displayed, as is the case in the Revelation. "Behold I come quickly," it is said in ch. xxii. 7, "Blessed is he, who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." And again at the close, "He who testifies these things saith, Yea, I come quickly: Amen, come Lord Jesus."

In ch. 5 we read, "Neither fornicators, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God, nor they who do things indecent."[1] The three first classes are taken from 1 Cor. vi. 9, the last class, loosely appended to the others, is from Rev. xxi. 27, where all that "does abomination and lie" is excluded from the kingdom of God.

We turn now to the epistle of the church of Smyrna concerning the martyrdom of Polycarp. In ch. 2 we find the words, "Having respect to the grace of Christ, they despised all the torments of the world, through one hour redeeming themselves from eternal punishment. And the fire of their cruel tormentors was cold to them; for their object was to escape that fire which is eternal, and shall never be extinguished."[2] These words point to Rev. xiv. 9—11, the passage with which Cyprian often exhorted his people to continue stedfast in the time of persecution. The torment of eternal fire is there threatened especially to those, who, renouncing the faith of Jesus, worship the beast and his image, and receive the mark upon their forehead or their hand.

It is said in ch. xvii., "But when the emulous and envious and wicked adversary of the generation of the righteous, saw the greatness of his martyrdom and his blameless behaviour from the first, and how he had been crowned with the crown of immortality," &c.[3] There is here an unmistakeable reference to ch. ii. 10, where in the very epistle to the angel of the church of Smyrna, which was probably even then presided over by Polycarp, the "crown of life" is held out as the reward of martyrdom, and

1 Καὶ οὔτε πόρνοι οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενοκοῖται βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσουσι, οὔτε οἱ ποιοῦντες τὰ ἄτοπα.

2 Προσέχοντες τῇ τοῦ χριστοῦ χάριτι τῶν κοσμικῶν κατεφρόνουν βασάνων, διὰ μιᾶς ὥρας τὴν αἰώνιον κόλασιν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι· καὶ τὸ πῦρ ἦν αὐτοῖς ψυχρὸν τὸ τῶν ἀπηνῶν βασανιστῶν· πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν γὰρ εἶχον φυγεῖν τὸ αἰώνιον καὶ μηδέποτε σβεννύμενον.

3 Ὁ δὲ ἀντίζηλος καὶ βάσκανος καὶ πονηρὸς, ὁ ἀντικείμενος τῷ γίνει τῶν δικαίων, ἰδὼν τό τε μέγεθος αὐτοῦ τῆς μαρτυρίας, καὶ τὴν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἀνεπίληπτον πολιτείαν, ἐστεφανωμένον τε τῷ τῆς ἀφθαρσίας στεφάνῳ, κ. τ. λ.

that, too, immediately after the devil had been represented as the author of the persecution.

The doxology in ch. 20, "through his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; to whom the glory, honour, power, greatness, for ever, Amen,"[1] is taken from Rev. v. 13. The number four is preserved, but greatness is put in the place of blessing. The expression, for ever, and Amen, is used alike in both places. It is precisely in such forms, that the borrowing from Scripture is most customary.

PAPIAS.

The bishop of Cappadocia, Andreas, who lived about the end of the fifth century,[2] says at the conclusion of the introduction of his commentary on the Apocalypse, "Respecting the divine inspiration of the book, we deem it superfluous to say much, since it has been attested as worthy of credit by men of such blessed memory as Gregory the theologian, and Cyril, and even by those of greater antiquity, Papias, Irenaeus, Methodius, and Hippolytus; from whom also we have received many incitements to our work, as we have also at some places made quotations from them.[3]

There can be no doubt that the testimonies, to which Andreas refers for the inspiration and credibility of the book, bore witness also to the composition of it by the apostle John. For, the two points were in ancient times most closely united together. Those who held the divine inspiration, held also the apostolical authorship of the book, and *vice versa*. It is but apparently, that Dionysius of Alexandria in Eusebius admits the inspiration, while he denies its having been composed by the apostle. What he means is only a certain, a vague inspiration. It is in the very denial of its inspiration in the full sense, in which it is here

[1] Διὰ παιδὸς αὐτοῦ τοῦ μονογενοῦς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· ᾧ ἡ δόξα, τιμὴ, κράτος, μεγαλοσυνὴ, εἰς αἰῶνας. Ἀμήν.

[2] See Rettig, Zeugnisse des Andreas und Arethas für die Ächtheit der Apoc. Stud. und Crit. 31, p. 739.

[3] Περὶ μὲν τοῦ θεοπνεύστου τῆς βίβλου περιττὸν μηκύνειν τὸν λόγον ἡγούμεθα, τῶν μακαρίων Γρηγορίου, κ. τ. λ. Very much the same is said by the later Arethas in his preface to his commentary. But as what he says was undoubtedly taken from Andreas, there is no use for making any further reference to it.

maintained by Andreas, that Dionysius grounds his attack against the apostolical character of the Apocalypse. Besides, the testimony of the persons referred to in behalf of the credibility and inspiration could only have been decisive, if they had also affirmed its composition by the apostle. For it was only in respect to this historical point, not in regard to what was properly theological, that they could be appealed to as competent witnesses. And hence in referring to Papias and those mentioned along with him, stress is laid especially on the *age*, which could only be of moment, if the point to be determined respected the author, and the inspiration of the book as connected with its apostolical character.

In the passage itself, Papias appears among the witnesses for the composition of the Apocalypse by the apostle John. What is said regarding him deserves the greater weight, as the other witnesses, whom Andreas refers to, have actually and demonstrably held the apostolical character and inspiration of the Apocalypse. That Andreas had himself read the work of Papias—his *one* work, for antiquity mentions no more, and Irenaeus and Eusebius both say expressly, that he had written but that one—is plain, not only from the passage itself now before us, but also from the fact, that Andreas in the course of his commentary gives a literal quotation from Papias.

But this quotation has also an importance of its own. It contains a proof of the point, that Papias really perceived in the Apocalypse a divine, and consequently an apostolical book. Andreas in his commentary says, at Rev. xii. 7—9, "But Papias says thus literally, 'Some of them—namely of those that had once been good angels—he permits to exercise government also in respect to the administration of the earth, and commanded them to rule properly.' And again he says, 'But it happened, that their battle-array ended in nothing.'"[1] It has been thought, that these words of Papias treat of the dominion of angels, and their administration of the affairs of this earth, and have no essential hermeneutical reference to the passage Rev. xii. 7, on which they are cited. But Andreas was not so senseless, as to have cited them, if that had been the case. In such a supposition, besides,

1 Παπίας δὲ οὕτως ἐπὶ λέξεως· ἐνίοις δὲ αὐτῶν, δηλαδὴ τῶν πάλαι θείων ἀγγέλων, καὶ τῆς περὶ τὴν γῆν διακοσμήσεως ἔδωκεν ἄρχειν· καὶ καλῶς ἄρχειν παρηγγύησε· καὶ ἐξῆς φησι· εἰς οὐδὲν (δὲ) συνέβη τελευτῆσαι τὴν τάξιν αὐτῶν.

the last words of Papias must have been overlooked. Under the fruitless battle-array of the fallen angels, we can only understand their conflict with Christ, as described in the Apocalypse. Papias had first in explanation of the passage in the Apocalypse delineated the divine mission of the angels. Then, how wickedly they had acted in regard to it. Thereafter, the conflict of Michael and his angels with them. Finally, the issue. Andreas communicates only the beginning and the end. Papias proceeds on the supposition, that the supernatural event reported in the Apocalypse is an absolutely certain fact, which he seeks to arrange in its proper order.[1] This supposition rests on his conviction of the divinity of the Scripture, which relates the event; but it was an event that could only be known through the Revelation.[2]

It may be left still undecided, whether in the passages referred to Papias had expressly cited the Apocalypse. Even if he did here, what he has not rarely done elsewhere, referred to the tradition orally received from the apostles what he took from their writings, the matter would not be in any essential respect altered.

Eusebius has frequently been brought into the lists against Andreas. It is maintained, that this author, so much older and more credible, contains no trace of Papias having known and written on the Apocalypse. But these traces certainly exist, and they who talk thus have simply not found them.

In B. III. 39, Eusebius says, "The same historian also gives other accounts, which, he says, he adds as received by him from unwritten tradition, and certain strange parables of the Saviour, and teachings of his, and some other things containing too much in them of the fabulous. In these he says, that there would be a

1 Papias, according to the explanatory statement given by himself, did not confine himself merely to the communication of the recorded matter, but he added his explanations also at his own hand. He says, in Eusebius III. 39, "But I shall not regret to subjoin to my interpretations, whatsoever I have at any time accurately ascertained and treasured up in my memory, as I have received it from the elders," Rufinus: exponere cum interpretationibus suis.

2 The Scholia, edited by J. A. Cramer, Catena in epistolas catholicas, etc. Oxford 1840, after τὴν τάξιν αὐτῶν, add, οἱονεὶ τὴν πολεμικὴν ἐγχείρησιν, and correctly refer the words to those in the Apoc., "and the great dragon was cast down," etc. These scholia, which belong to a comparatively late age, borrow the words of Papias simply from Andreas, and they are improperly regarded by Hävernick in his Königsberg Programm, Insunt lucubrationes crit. ad Apoc. spectantes, along with other similar additions, as proofs of a further independent use of the work of Papias.

certain millennium after the resurrection of the dead, and that there would be a corporeal reign of Christ on this very earth. I believe he has obtained such things from a misunderstanding of the apostolical narrations; not having understood aright what was spoken by them figuratively and mystically. For, he appears to have been a person of very weak discernment, if one may judge from his writings. Yet he has succeeded in drawing most of the ecclesiastical writers after him to the same opinion, who were swayed by the antiquity of the man—such as Irenaeus, and the rest who follow in the same course."[1]

What is here to be understood under certain strange parables and teachings of Christ, we may learn from the proofs, which Irenaeus gives out of Papias, in B. V. c. 33. From these, and from what immediately follows the passage just quoted, we must think of the narratives, which relate to the future world, and which represent in a material manner the blessedness to be expected there by the righteous.

Now it is itself a matter of great importance, that according to this testimony of Eusebius, the work of Papias contains the doctrine of the millennium. As this doctrine has its only source in the Apocalypse, and never occurs apart from it, we have in this a testimony, not merely that Papias knew the book, but also that he acknowledged it. For had he not held the book to be the production of John and consequently divine, he would not on its authority have received this doctrine, which plays so important a part, and forms a sort of centre with him.

Certainly by the report of Eusebius Papias appears to have referred this doctrine to oral tradition. But this makes little difference. It was quite the manner of Papias to refer to tradition what he originally drew from Scripture, in the narrow sense in which he understood it. He had a special predilection for tradition, as he himself says in Eusebius, "I do not think that I have derived so much benefit from the reading of books, as from the oral reports of those that are still alive." We are not from this to imagine any intentional deception. What he got from

[1] Καὶ ἄλλα δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς συγγραφεὺς ὡς ἐκ παραδόσεως ἀγράφου εἰς αὐτον ἥκοντα παρατέθειται, ξένας τε τίνας παραβολὰς τοῦ σωτῆρος καὶ διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ τίνα ἄλλα μυθικώτερα· ἐν οἷς καὶ χιλιάδα τινά φησιν κ. τ. λ.

Scripture became unconsciously transfused into that which he derived from his favourite source.

It was thus that Eusebius himself regarded the matter. For, that by the "apostolical narrations" mentioned by him, we are to understand *written* accounts, and, from the connection, the Apocalypse more particularly, is to be inferred from what has been well urged by Lücke, that if Eusebius was able to reckon after Papias what he had misunderstood in the apostolical narrations, this appears to imply that Eusebius had these narrations before him, and that consequently they were written. Eusebius would otherwise have spoken at random; he would have uttered a reproach, for which he could adduce no proof. The fact also of its being *apostolical* narrations that are spoken of leads to the same result. Oral traditions would not have been designated thus. Apostolical narrations could properly be only such as proceeded immediately from the apostles. The absolute purity of this source, as implied in Eusebius, also points in the same direction. *Mediately* apostolical accounts might even then have contained some false elements, so that the guilt could not have been laid altogether on the head of Papias. But the *oral* reports to which Papias alludes, could only have proceeded by his own account in a very small measure from the apostles; personally he could only have heard John. But all doubt is excluded if we look more closely to the connection in Eusebius. In what immediately precedes, Eusebius had pointed to the circumstance, how the strange narrative of Papias respecting Justus, named Barsabas, had its starting-point in what was reported of this man in the Acts, and how the alleged tradition had undoubtedly been concocted out of several passages in the Acts, together with Mark xvi. 18. A subject was wanting for this latter passage, and it might well furnish an embellishment for Justus. If this connection is taken into account, we shall not think of understanding by the apostolical narrations any other than written accounts; and if we do this, we cannot but think pre-eminently of the Apocalypse. Nor can we mistake, in the account given by Eusebius, the reference which the expressions of Papias carry to Rev. xx. 1—6. To this passage points the word "millennium." The words also "after the resurrection of the dead" rest on a false view of ver.

5, 6; and "the kingdom of Christ upon this earth," alludes to ver. 4 and 6.

The circumstance of Papias delighting to refer to oral tradition what he drew from the writings of the apostles, accounts for Eusebius having no other testimonies of Papias to quote in regard to the Apocalypse. For his testimonies in respect to the Apocalypse could thus be only of an indirect kind. But that he should search diligently after such, is more than we could expect of Eusebius, from the whole attitude he assumes in regard to this book. His honesty or his caution did not allow him to pass over any express testimonies; but he felt himself under no obligation to trace out mere indications. As has been well remarked by Strouth in his translation of Eusebius, I. p. 185, "We notice generally in Eusebius a certain timidity and reserve as often as he speaks of the book of Revelation. He either leaves others to speak of it, and takes good care to tell us on every hand, how many rejected it, or if he feels himself obliged to speak, he still never speaks decidedly; but lets all freely choose for themselves. Whence it is clear, that the book must have been held in great esteem by many, and must have had fond admirers, whom Eusebius was unwilling to offend by openly rejecting it."

If we are to hold fast the conviction, that Papias acknowledged and honoured the Apocalypse as a work of the apostle John, it may be farther asked, was Papias an immediate scholar of the apostle, or did he only stand in a more distant relation to him? According to the answer to this question is the importance of his testimony to be estimated.

Irenaeus in B. V. c. 33, calls Papias "a hearer of John, and friend of Polycarp, one of the ancients." These words of Ireneaus, who is here a guarantee of undoubted credibility, necessarily imply, that Papias must have been in manhood or in advanced youth, before John died. For, Irenaeus places the dignity and authority of Papias and the importance of his work in this, that he had been a hearer of John. An age of eight or ten years, as Rettig supposes, was obviously not enough. It would have been childish to call him the hearer of a great man, who had once when a child heard such a man speak, and on this hearing to rest the importance of his book.

With this statement of Irenaeus concerning the relation of Papias to the apostle John, agrees, when rightly understood, what Papias in Eusebuis III. 39, says of himself, "If I met with any one, who had been a follower of the elders anywhere, I made inquiry after the discourses of the elders; what Andrew or what Peter had said, or what Philip, or what Thomas, or James; or what John or Matthew, or any other of the disciples of our Lord; also (I inquired) what Aristion and the presbyter John, the disciples of our Lord say."

Here we must first of all determine, what we are to understand by the *elders*. The most natural supposition plainly is, that it means the apostles; for a whole series of apostles follows immediately after the expression, and "the disciples of our Lord" are only brought in as a sort of appendage. Eusebius, too, has made mention only of the apostles. In what immediately precedes he says, "He himself (Papias) says, in the preface to his book, that he had not been himself a hearer of the holy apostles, nor had seen them with his eyes, but had received the doctrines of faith from *their* intimate friends." We are led also to the same result by the words that occur in what follows: "And this Papias, whom we have just mentioned, confesses to us that he had received the discourses of the apostles from those who had been followers of them."[1]

But we have the less ground for disputing that the apostles are to be understood here by the elders, as it is capable of proof that they elsewhere bore this name, and in that particular circle from which Papias sprung.

The first germ of this designation is to be found in 1 Pet. v. 1, where Peter admonishes the elders, as being himself also an elder. As the elders bore this name on account of their office, Peter must also have called himself a fellow-elder simply because he held the *office* of an elder. But as he was not invested with such an office in any particular church, he must mean that he occupied

1 Καὶ ὁ νῦν ἡμῖν δηλούμενος Παπίας τοὺς μὲν τῶν ἀποστόλων λόγους παρὰ τῶν αὐτοῖς παρηκολουθηκότων ὁμολογεῖ παρειληφέναι. Olshausen remarks on the genuineness of the Gospels, p. 227, "Here, therefore, Eusebius himself sets ἀπόστολοι, where above the πρεσβύτεροι had stood, and at the same time indicates, that the παρηκολουθηκότες were companions of the apostles, since he adds αὐτοῖς. The whole expression παρακολουθεῖν is thus also used of the apostles alone; who would say, that any followed the scholars of the apostles? The expression could not fitly be used of such."

the same position in regard to the church at large, which they did in particular Christian communities. The footing of equality therefore, is only an apparent one. The apostle rather seeks, in a delicate way, to unfold by the expression his own superior dignity, and indicates the right he thence possessed to give the word of exhortation. If he was their fellow elder, he was also their superior elder; if their brother in office, he was also their father.

St John has still further, as was often his custom, developed the germ that he found lying in the writings of his fellow apostle. He presents himself in 2 John, ver. 1, and 3 John, ver. 1, simply under the name of the elder. It was no longer necessary to add his proper name. Of those who had been his companions in the office of elder, none now survived. In the Apocalypse, ch. iv. 4, and a variety of other passages, we are met by the twenty-four elders. We have already shewn that these are the twelve apostles, together with the twelve patriarchs; and they imply that an Old Testament foundation existed for this usage, as it does in Isai. xxiv. 23, where the Lord appears as surrounded by a senatorial band, or high council of elders. In perfect accordance with the circumstance, that in John, and only in him, the apostles appear under the name of elders, is the fact, that in all his writings the different, and in other books of the New Testament wide-spread use of the name elder, is not to be found. John viii. 9 forms only an apparent exception. For this passage belongs to the story about the adulteress, which was shoved in at a later period. We cannot think here of accident. The explanation of the fact, which binds all the writings of John with a fine but strong band of unity, lies in this, that the name of elder represented itself to John as one set apart and consecrated for the apostleship.

This usage of John, we find, as in Papias, so also again in Ignatius, who equally with the other belonged to the circle of John. He says in the epistle to the church at Philadelphia, c. 5, "Fleeing to the gospel as to the flesh of Jesus Christ and to the apostles as to the presbytery of the church."[1] In the epistle to

1 Προσφυγὼν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ ὡς σαρκὶ Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀποστόλοις ὡς πρεσβυτερίῳ ἐκκλησίας. Vedelius, in his ep. Ignat. p. 137, says on this passage, "When the apostles are called in Scripture, and by Ignatius, elders of the church, the word church is taken for the universal church, scattered throughout the whole world.

the Trallians, he says at ch. 2, "Be ye subject to your presbyters (or, those that are in the eldership) as the apostles of Jesus Christ."[1] And in ch. 3, "The bishop is the image of the Father of all, but the elders are as the high council of God, and whole band of apostles."[2] In the eldership of each church, with the bishop at their head, Ignatius saw an image of the eldership of the apostles, placed over the whole church, with God or Christ at his head, as is presented to our view in the Apocalypse.

Now, the proper source for Papias were the elders, that is, the apostles, and such as might be connected with them of the other immediate disciples of our Lord. From this source he was for the most part enabled to draw but indirectly, through the medium of those who formed the bridge between him and the apostolic age. He had directly conversed only with two men, who had survived from the times of the apostles to his own time, viz., the apostle John and Aristion, the Lord's disciple. At these he inquired not into what *they had said*, but he asked them what they say.

It was necessary to name John twice, first in the number of those, from whom Papias drew *mediately* his reports, as on a like footing with Peter, etc. For, his converse with John was not of so close a description, as to render superfluous the mediation of others, and to admit of nothing more being presented to him from derived sources.

The Lord's disciples—this was common alike to John and Aristion. The elder—this was a distinctive appellation of John. Aristion stands first, and John follows, because Papias had enjoyed a closer intimacy with Aristion. The precedence of Aristion and the twofold mention of John (his being already mentioned among the number of those from whom Papias mediately received his reports), rest upon the same ground.

But when at Acts xv. others, not the apostles, are called elders of the church, we are to understand, that the apostles were not elders of any particular church, such as Jerusalem, but that each church had its own elders separate from the apostles. The apostles were elders of the church universal."

[1] Ὑποτάσσεσθε τῷ πρεσβυτερίῳ ὡς Ἀποστόλοις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

[2] Ὁ ἐπίσκοπος τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων τύπος ὑπάρχει, οἱ δὲ πρεσβύτεροι ὡς συνέδριον θεοῦ καὶ σύνδεσμος ἀποστόλων Χριστοῦ. On which Vedelius remarks, that Ignatius evidently alludes to the regimen of particular churches, and ascribes to all and each of the apostles the same dignity that the elders had in each particular church.

Eusebius certainly understood this passage of Papias otherwise. He finds in it a confession of Papias himself, that he had not come into immediate contact with the apostles. Papias, he conceives, here distinguishes two Johns; he first names the apostle and evangelist in the list of apostles; and then the elder or presbyter John, probably some one invested with the office of elder in a church, whom he names along with Aristion as persons he had himself heard, while he gives it to be understood that he had not himself heard the apostles.

This view of Eusebius has found much support, especially with those whom it *suited*, who shared in his dislike to the Apocalypse. But it would only be admissible, if no other explanation could be found. For, it has the following objections against it: 1. The second John should in that case have been so designated, that he could easily be distinguished from the apostle. On the contrary, however, the word *elder* points precisely to their identity, because the apostle had designated himself thus in his epistles; and also because in what precedes the apostles were *alone*, according to our view, and at all events pre-eminently denoted. With the second as with the first John, the disciples of the Lord are named as the genus, the elders as the species in the genus. 2. Another objection is found in the testimony of Irenaeus, according to which Papias was a hearer of the apostle John. The explanation of Eusebius takes this away; since according to it Papias must have stood in no other relation to the apostle John than he did to the other apostles. He must have received his information from him only at second hand. The substitution, therefore, of the so-called presbyter John for the apostle John would fall as a burden on Eusebius. 3. Papias ascribes to the elder John what he afterwards says of Mark. It is most natural to suppose, that the last evangelist had expressed himself upon the earlier. 4. Papias says afterwards, "This also said the elder" (*καὶ τοῦτο ὁ Πρεσβύτερος ἔλεγε*), without supplying any name. It is evident, that "the elder" takes with him the place of a proper name. He could not have spoken so of a common presbyter. St John, however, had in his epistles used the name "elder" as a substitute for his proper name, because he was the only apostle to whom the persons he wrote to stood specially related. The reference to these epistles excluded all uncertainty. 5. The historical

existence of the so-called presbyter John rests on very weak grounds. It bears entirely the character of an airy phantom; nobody can lay their hands on a real historical proof of it. The only fact, which seems to favour its existence, is the existence of two graves of John at Ephesus. But this fact itself lies under well-grounded suspicions; as no one affirms it from his personal observation, no one ventures confidently to assert it, and even if it were correct, it would still be far from speaking of a presbyter John along with the apostle John.[1] But if we take into account the refusal on the part of Dionysius of Alexandria and of Eusebius to acknowledge the Apocalypse as a properly divine work, we shall not doubt that they availed themselves of every thing which could be raked up for the existence of a presbyter John without troubling themselves about proofs which they held of small account. It is, however, against the existence of a presbyter John, that Irenaeus designates Papias simply as "a hearer of John." If there had been a second John, who as "a disciple of the Lord" was held in great respect in the same place where the first laboured, he would have described him more exactly, so that he might be known to be different from the apostle. Further, Polycrates of Ephesus in his epistle to Victor and the Roman church, in Eusebius V. 24, knows only of one John in Ephesus, the apostle, and of a presbyter John different from him, no trace is to be found in the narrative he there gives of the great "primary elements" or beginnings of the church in Lesser Asia, of the great dead, who lie buried there, and are to have a glorious resurrection at the coming of the Lord. Lücke supposes that Polycrates manifestly speaks here only of bishops and teachers of very great consideration, and that the only conclusion from this is that the presbyter John did not stand so high. But this is really to abandon the existence of a presbyter John. For the subject of discourse is about a teacher of very great consideration, one who was an immediate disciple of Christ, and who reached very nearly to the dignity of the apostles. The story of a presbyter John is obviously the product of a double factor. First, the superscription of the second and third epistles of John. It was not understood how the apostle John should designate himself

1 Jerome says, de vir. illustr. c. 9: Nonnulli putant duas memorias ejusdem apostoli Johannis esse.

there simply as "the elder." It was supposed that an elder in the common sense must be meant by it. Even Neander, in his Apostol. Zeitalter, p. 645, still says, "It is extraordinary that the author of the two last epistles of John should take to himself the name of the presbyter, which is not the proper designation of an apostle." Lücke, too, is quite at a loss in regard to the epithet. The other factor is the passage of Papias before us. People snatched at the appearance of support it furnishes for a second John beside the apostle the more eagerly, as they found in such an one an intermediate person between Papias and the apostles, and it became unnecessary to rest the rejection of what he reported on the authority of the apostles simply on the great weakness of his own understanding. Let that only be considered which Irenaeus in B. V. c. 33 communicates out of Papias. There was plainly a desire felt to connect such things with some other John than the apostle. This origin of the presbyter John is in unison with his character. His uncertain floating form manifestly bespeaks it to be a mere product of art, the offspring of perplexity and inclination. 6. That Eusebius himself was conscious of the want of solidity in his own view, and of his inclination disposing him to adopt it, appears from his elsewhere, in his Chronikon, acknowledging Papias without hesitation as a hearer of the apostle John.[1]

The last refuge of those, who seek to depreciate the importance of the testimony, which is given by Papias in behalf of the Apocalypse is this, "that if the Apocalypse was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, as itself indicates, the testimony of Papias loses much of its immediateness, as it thus comes to be removed to a distance of thirty or forty years later than the Apocalypse." But we have already shewn, both on internal and external grounds, that the Apocalypse was composed during the persecution of Domitian, and consequently in the same decennium, within which the converse of Papias with the apostle John falls.

We know very well, that Papias is not an absolutely credible witness. His testimony, however, is of the greatest importance, and strong reasons are required to shake it.

1 Ed. Aucher. II. p. 157. Joannem apostolum usque ad Trajani tempora permansisse Irenaeus tradit. Post quem ejusdem auditores agnoscebantur Papias Hierapolitanus et Polycarpus Smyrnæorum regionis episcopus.

JUSTIN MARTYR.

In his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Justin says, ch. 81, "And since also with us a certain man, whose name is John, one of the apostles of Christ, in the Revelation given to him, has prophesied, that those who believe in our Christ shall spend a thousand years in Jerusalem, and that afterwards the general, and, in a word, eternal resurrection of all shall take place at once, and the judgment."[1]

The import of this testimony we cannot describe better than in the words of Lücke: "Nothing is clearer than that, as remarked by Eusebius (H. E. IV. 18),[2] Justin, in this passage, regards the Apocalypse as a holy, genuinely Christian production, and expressly declares it to be a work of John the apostle." Lücke has also relieved us of the unpleasant task of refuting the groundless reasons on which Rettig has based his allegation, the offspring of his own inclination, that the words, "one of the apostles of Christ," which existed even in the time of Eusebius, had been introduced by a later hand.

The dialogue with Trypho was held, according to the testimony of Eusebius IV. 18, at Ephesus, and consequently in the place where the best information was to be obtained regarding the origin of the Apocalypse. The dialogue was not composed before the year 139, though probably not much later, (Semisch, Justin Martyr I. p. 103.) There was not, therefore, quite half a century between the composition of the Apocalypse and this testimony of Justin. In that he speaks so confidently, that there can be no doubt he expressed the opinion that then generally prevailed in the Christian church.

Efforts have been made to shake the importance of this testimony by saying, that it stands *quite isolated*, and that Justin nowhere else refers to the Apocalypse. Rettig says, "We find in the indifference that leads him to let passages lie unnoticed,

1 Καὶ ἐπειδὴ καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν ἀνήρ τις ᾧ ὄνομα Ἰωάννης, εἷς τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν ἀποκαλύψει γενομένῃ αὐτῷ χίλια ἔτη ποιήσειν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ τοὺς τῷ ἡμετέρῳ Χριστῷ πιστεύσαντας προεφήτευσε, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τὴν καθολικὴν καὶ συνελόντι φάναι αἰωνίαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἅμα πάντων ἀνάστασιν γενήσεσθαι καὶ κρίσιν.

2 He says of Justin there, and especially of the dialogue with Trypho: μέμνηται δὲ καὶ τῆς Ἰωάννου ἀποκαλύψεως σαφῶς τοῦ ἀποστόλου αὐτὴν εἶναι λέγων.

which he could have most appropriately employed as proofs, the clear indication that he ascribed to it no apostolic worth." And Lücke also says, "It were to have been desired that we had some passages in the writings of Justin, from which we could more distinctly learn his view of the Apocalypse. But not one allusion to the Apocalypse is to be discovered; what was once regarded as of this description turns out, on closer investigation, to have scarcely any semblance of it."

The closer investigation, however, conducts to a quite different result. It fully vindicates the express testimony of Justin from its isolation, and places it in the centre of a wide circle of unquestionable references to the Apocalypse. It yields as rich a booty as we could properly expect, considering the peculiar nature and tendency of the writings of Justin, which have a predominant inclination toward the outward. It would be beside our purpose here to give a full exhibition of the materials that exist. It will be enough to give *proofs*.

In the chapter which immediately precedes the one that contains the properly classical passage, it is said, "But I and the Christians, who in all respects hold the right views, know well that there shall be a resurrection of the flesh, and the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah *and the others* confess that there shall be a thousand years in Jerusalem, after it has been built, adorned, and enlarged." The authorities common to Justin and his Jewish opponent are here expressly mentioned. But Ezekiel and Isaiah knew nothing of the thousand years. This is derived from "the others," the prophets of Christ (in ch. i. 39.) The indeterminateness with which he here speaks of them has its correspondence in the expression, "a man whose name was John," found in the quotation formerly given. Both alike are to be explained on the ground that Justin is arguing with one who does not acknowledge New Testament authorities, so that these cannot be formally pressed. That Justin, in point of fact, drew his doctrine of the millennium only from the Apocalypse, plainly appears from ch. 81, where he enters more distinctly on the proofs for the doctrine. Isai. lxv. 22 he views as containing a secret intimation of it; so also he thinks Ps. xc. 4 must point to it. But one sees at a glance that it was not on these passages that Justin rested his proper confidence in regard to this doctrine,

that he only quoted them in order to prevent the Jew from objecting, that there was nothing of it in the old Testament. And he at last comes out with the proper proof-passage. If Justin had had to do only with Christians, he would at once have begun with the Revelation; and the passages of the Old Testament, if he had quoted them at all, he would only have quoted as slender indications, which received their light from the clear visions of the Apocalypse.

In ch. 45 it is said, "So that through this economy the serpent, which at the beginning wrought wickedness, and the angels that became like him, were broken in their power, and death was despised, and at the second coming of Christ, he shall entirely cease from those that believe on him, and live so as to please him, no longer continuing to be, when the one part are sent into the judgment and condemnation of fire, to be unceasingly punished, and the other shall abide in a state free from suffering, from change, from grief and mortality." On this passage we may compare Rev. xii. 9, "And the great dragon, the old serpent, was cast upon the earth, and his angels were cast with him;" xx. 2, "And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years;" xx. 10, "And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." The peculiar thought of the annihilation of death is from ch. xx. 14, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire; this is the second death." Comp. the words in ch. xxi. 4, "and there shall be no more death." The expression "unceasingly" points to ch. xiv. 11. The representation given of the blessedness of the righteous rests on the well-known passages of the Revelation, to which elsewhere also Justin frequently alludes.

In ch. 113 Justin says, "This is he, by whom and through whom the Father will make new both heaven and earth (*καὶ τὸν οὐρανον καὶ τὴν γῆν ὁ πατὴρ μέλλει καινουργεῖν.*) Here we may compare Rev. xxi. 5, "Behold I make all things new," and ch. xxi. 1, "And I saw a new heavens and a new earth."

It is said immediately afterwards, "This is he who will shine in Jerusalem as an eternal light." This is nowhere said in Scripture specially of Christ excepting in Rev. xxi. 23, "The

Lamb is the Light of it"—comp. in regard to the *eternal* in ch. xxii. 5.

It is said in the same chapter, " But after the holy resurrection he will give us the eternal possession." The holy resurrection here is the resurrection of the saints, in contrast to the general resurrection in ch. 81. (See Semisch, Justin II. p. 471.) This holy resurrection is nowhere mentioned but in Rev. xx. 5, 6, " This is the first resurrection. Blessed is he and *holy*, who has part in the first resurrection." There is not another passage in all Scripture, which speaks of a resurrection of the righteous before the general resurrection.

In ch. 117 we read, " These filthy garments which have clothed you all, that have become Christians through the name of Jesus, God will shew to be taken away from us, when he raises all up, and places in an eternal and indissoluble kingdom, such as are incorrupt and immortal and subject to no pain, while he sends others to the eternal punishment of fire." Allusion is here made to the expression in Rev. vii. 9, 13, " clothed with white garments," and ch. xix. 9, " And it was given them to be clothed with a linen garment shining pure."

In the first apology it is said in ch. 28, " Among us the leader of wicked demons is called the *serpent*, and *Satan*, and *devil*, as you can learn, if you will search our Scriptures." These three names occur in Rev. xii. 9, xx. 2, and nowhere else in the Scriptures, to which Justin refers.

If these proofs are taken into account, it will be clear in what sense Jerome says, that Justin Martyr and Irenaeus *expounded* the Apocalypse.[1] It was long before a proper commentary on the Apocalypse appeared, but at a comparatively early period the materials for such a work were prepared. A purpose in regard to this is found even in Papias, who expressly intimates, that he meant to give an exposition of this book, as well as of the discourses of the apostles. But Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, with whom also may be coupled Melito, were the first, who endeavoured seriously to make good such a purpose. Often do we perceive in

[1] De vir. illustr. 9: Quarto decimo anno secundam post Neronem persecutionem movente Domitiano in Patmos insulam relegatus scripsit Apocalypsin quam interpretantur Justinus Martyr et Irenaeus.

them the effort to arrange the contents of the Apocalypse in connection with the whole scheme of biblical truth, to form a bridge between it and the Christian views and sentiments of the time, and to break through the shell of its figurative language into the kernel of its ideas. We could give from Irenaeus especially a series of passages, which would be pretty similar to a commentary, if not on the whole, yet certainly on particular parts of the Apocalypse.[1] If the peculiar character of the book and its relation to the Greek spirit is duly considered, it will be manifest, that the matter could proceed in no other way, and that proper exegetical works could only begin to appear at a later period. But so much is clear from this expression of Jerome, that he had read Justin more attentively than our modern critics, who have been so sadly perplexed with his statement.

MELITO.

A contemporary of Justin, Melito, bishop of Sardis one of the seven Apocalyptic churches, wrote according to Eusebius, "on the devil and the Revelation of John" (Eus. IV. c. 26.) It would seem by Eusebius, that Melito had treated both subjects in the same work. But according to Jerome (De vir. illustr. c. 24), who had probably himself read the writings, he wrote "one book on the devil, and one book on the Apocalypse of John." It was not unlikely a divided whole. The Apocalypse is especially rich in matter on the subject of the devil.

The title at any rate of Melito's production asserts the Apocalypse to be the production of John; not *a* John merely, but the apostle John must have been regarded by him as its author. For, the apostle alone could be designated by the simple name of John. Any other John would have been marked by some surname, so as to distinguish him from the apostle. Nay, what is still more, the apostle John must in the time of Melito have been generally acknowledged as the author of the Apocalypse. Melito would

[1] Massuet in his prelim. dissertations says: Respiciebat Hieron. ad varia Apoc. loca, quae in suis quinque libris explicat Irenaeus, et praesertim in quinto, sub cujus finem de millenario Christi regno, et de Antichristo disserens, plura sacri hujusce libri testimonia interpretatur et ad institutum accommodat.

otherwise have expressed himself more definitely, in opposition to other opinions, that he meant the apostle John and no other person. That he speaks only of the Apocalypse of John, speaks more loudly in favour of the genuineness of the book, than if he had expressly called John the apostle. How, after doubts began to be started, respect was had to them, is evident alone from the superscription of the Apocalypse: Revelation of John the theologue (divine); and other things of a like kind.

The connection between the production of Melito on Satan and that on the Apocalypse shews, that the latter handled the actual contents of the Revelation. This is the only one among his numerous productions which specially refers to a book of sacred Scripture; a fact which plainly implies, that he had a peculiar predilection for the Apocalypse, and this predilection again implies, that he was convinced of the genuineness of the Apocalypse. In every age the book has been loved only by those, who have held it to be a genuine production of the apostle John.

Melito himself had the reputation in antiquity of possessing prophetical gifts. Polycrates of Ephesus says in Eusebius, ch. V. 24, shortly after his death, "And Melito, the eunuch, who accomplished everything in the Holy Spirit (*τὸν ἐν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι πάντα πολιτευσάμενον*), who rests at Sardis, waiting for the visitation from heaven, in which he shall rise from the dead." According to Jerome, Tertullian said of him, "in the seven books written against the church for Montanus," that he was accounted "by the most of our people" as a prophet. This prophetical turn and direction had doubtless grown and formed itself by the special predilection he had for studying the Apocalypse.

POLYCRATES.

Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus in the second half of the second century, says in his letter to Victor and the church of Rome, as given by Eusebius, in B. III. 31 and V. 24, while enumerating the illustrious dead, who had once in their life-time adorned the church in Asia, and waited there for the resurrection, "We have also to add John, who rested on the Lord's bosom, who was a priest that bore the holy plate on the forehead (*τὸ πέταλον*), and a witness and teacher; he reposes at Ephesus."

It is natural to suppose, that Polycrates here describes the labours of John by their most lasting memorials, his *writings*, through which nearly a century after his death he still spoke in the most impressive manner to the church. In the words, "who rested on the Lord's bosom," we cannot mistake the reference that is made to the Gospel. The expression could only be taken from the Gospel, and it describes its innermost nature. In his epistles, John came forth pre-eminently as a *teacher*. The mode of address, "my children," implies this (1 John ii. 1, 12, 18, 28, iv. 1.)

That John is called a priest with reference to the Apocalypse, a priest who bore the plate on the forehead, is probable on this account alone, that the other epithet, a witness (or martyr), undoubtedly alludes to the Apocalypse. In what sense John was thus named—that it bore respect to a great tribulation, well known generally in the church, which befel him on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, is clear, not only from the common phraseology of the church, but also from the circumstance, that Polycrates in the same passage speaks of three other witnesses = martyrs. But the tradition of the church knows only of *one* martyr-suffering of John, that which is referred to in Rev. i. 9, and which forms the starting-point for the composition of this book.

It can easily be shewn, that all those have missed the right view who have failed to perceive the reference of the words, "who was a priest that bore the plate on the forehead," to the Apocalypse.

The unsuitableness of the literal interpretation which would represent John as actually wearing such an outward badge, is the more obvious, as this was not a general insigne of the priesthood, but distinctively belonged only to the high-priest. The chief badge of the high-priest's head-dress, which distinguished the high-priest from all the other priests, was a golden plate with the inscription, Holiness to the Lord; and this in the Alex. version is called *πέταλον* (comp. Ex. xxviii. 32 (36), xxix. 6, xxxix. 30. Add to this, that the whole passage of Polycrates is written in the higher, and, if we may so speak, Apocalyptic style. Melito is still called in it simply an eunuch.

Among those who regard the figurative interpretation as

the correct one, some would with Le Moyne (Illum adyta dei explorasse et evangelii arcana prae omnibus aliis penetrasse) refer the words to the depth of view taken in the Gospel of John. But in the high-priest the official character is the predominant point. We expect to see John in *office*. In the Gospel, however, the person of John falls entirely into the background. Absolute surrender, the passive and recepient disposition, is there the peculiar characteristic. We nowhere behold the high-priest in his office, but always the disciple who rested on the bosom of his Lord.

Others (Lücke) think of the important position which John held in the churches of Asia Minor. But the special reference to this particular part of the church is not indicated in a single word, and the comparison with the high-priest will not admit of our thinking of any relation but that which had reference to the whole of the church. To be the microcosm of the whole church of God was the very thing that most peculiarly distinguished the position of the high priest.

Baur (Krit. Unters. über die Evang. p. 370) conceives that John appears here "with the Old Testament predicate of the high priest, as the disciple, whom Jesus, being himself the high priest, left behind him as his kind of vicegerent, as the visible representative of the high priest on earth. (Not unlike is the thought long ago expressed by Cyprian, qui longe maxima auctoritate in ecclesia Christi enituerit.) But to assign such pre-eminent rank to John above the other apostles is opposed by the New Testament, in which a primacy is ascribed rather to Peter than John, and yet such an one as does not at all correspond to the high priesthood of the Old Testament (comp. ch. xxi. 14.) It is also opposed by the whole voice of ecclesiastical antiquity, in which no trace anywhere occurs of such a priority being ascribed to John, and is the less to be expected here, as we have before us a person sound in his church feeling. A sphere must be meant, in which John did not share in common with the other apostles, in which what was given to him was taken from them.

Now, besides the accompanying name of witness or martyr, there is this further circumstance to point us to the Apocalypse, that Polycrates in what immediately precedes mentions the daughters of Philip, who were so distinguished by divine gifts, and

afterwards also in regard to Melito takes notice of his possession of prophetical endowments. But it is of still greater weight, that in the Apocalypse the priesthood of all believers is so prominently brought out (comp. ch. i. 6, v. 10, xx. 6.) It is natural to suppose that in these passages there is found the proper starting-point for the high priesthood ascribed to John.

"The kernel of the priesthood," it was remarked at ch. i. 6, "was the close and immediate connection with God." And Baur remarks, Symbolikdes Mos. Cultus, II. p. 14, "the coming near, the being near, is frequently represented as the proper essence of the priesthood, nay, as being perfectly synonymous therewith is expressed by the same word." (Comp. Ex. xix. 22; Lev. x. 3, xxi. 17; Ezek. xlii. 13.) This prerogative of the priesthood culminated in the high priest. He alone could go into the holiest of all. In such a position of most intimate nearness to God we find John in the Apocalypse. He ascends to heaven, and receives there the Revelations of God; the Lord appears to him in glory, as related in ch. i., and he converses with angels as his fellow-servants.

Farther, the high priest, in consequence of his being admitted into the most immediate nearness to God, behoved in critical emergencies to enter into the Lord's presence, to inquire of him in behalf of the people, and to pray respecting the issue; and that a true divine answer should in such a case be put into his heart, he bore the Urim and Thummim as a pledge upon his heart (Numb. xxvii. 21.) To be able to *prophesy* was considered also by John, Gospel xi. 51, as a prerogative of the high priesthood. In the name and in the Spirit of all his brethren and companions in tribulation, "of all saints," for whom at the close he desires the grace of the Lord, John comes forth here to inquire before the Lord, and as the representative of the whole church he receives the answer—comp. ch. xxii. 17, where the Spirit, and John as his organ, utters the *Come*, as the bride's substitute. We have here the substance of the Urim and Thummim, the *complete enlightenment* and the *absolute truth* which was thereby pledged to the high priest. This is shewn at once by the superscription of the book, in ch. i. 1, 2.

It is quite manifest that this testimony of Polycrates for the Apocalypse is a very important one; the more so as it implies,

that his conviction is that also of the ancient church of Rome, nay that John was recognized in the whole church of Christ as the high priest with the holy plate on the forehead. That Epiphanius at a later period should have heedlessly transferred to James what is here said of John, will be urged by nobody against our explanation.

THE CHURCHES AT LYONS AND VIENNE.

The production of the churches at these places to the churches in Asia and Phrygia, touching the stedfastness of the martyrs in the persecution that prevailed in the year 177, preserved in its substance by Eusebius in B. V. c. 1, affords us a deep insight into the position which the Apocalypse then held in the church. We are not met there with an inactive theoretical conviction of its genuineness; we see how it formed during the persecution the centre of the church's views and feelings; how from it especially sprung the invincible courage of the martyrs; how its threatenings and its promises wrought with such power upon the minds of believers, that all the fury of the heathen was baffled and put to shame! We perceive the high importance which belongs to this particular portion of Scripture, which the church often fails in *quiet* times to understand, and then suffers itself to be drawn into a denial of its apostolic origin! We see how the cross, how suffering for the sake of Christ, is the best expositor of this book, the surest way of coming to an established conviction of its genuineness and inspiration!

At the very beginning of this production "the servants of Christ" write of "the great anger of the heathen against the saints," with reference to Rev. xi. 18, "and the heathen were *angry*, and thy wrath is come, and the time . . . to give reward to thy *servants*, the prophets and the *saints*."

It is said of Vettius Epagathus, "He was and is a genuine disciple of Christ, following the Lamb wherever he goes," literally applying to him the words in Rev. xiv. 4, "These are they who follow the Lamb wherever he goes." The passage is rightly understood of following as a matter of spiritual obligation, not of following as a recompense.

It is said further, "When these reports were spread abroad, all acted toward us in a bestial manner (πάντες ἀπεθηριώθησαν εἰς ἡμᾶς), so that if before some had restrained themselves on account of being relatives or friends, they now carried their cruelty and rage against us to a great excess." There is an unmistakeable allusion here to Rev. xiii. 1, "And I saw a beast rise out of the sea," where the heathen power of the world is represented under the symbol of a beast on account of its bestial character. The expression, "they acted in a bestial manner," should be put within inverted commas as a quotation. If a doubt remained, it would be set aside by the passages afterwards to be noticed. The passage is also important, inasmuch as it shews that the view adopted by us of the beast is the original one.

"After this the holy martyrs endured such tortures as surpass all description, Satan putting forth every effort that some blasphemies might be uttered also by them." We find the commentary in Rev. xiii. 5, 6, where it is said of the beast, to whom the dragon gave his power, and who is inspired and governed by him, "And there was given to him a mouth which spoke great things and blasphemies; and it opened its mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and those that dwell in heaven." By this passage we are to think, not only of blasphemies against Christ, but of blasphemies also against his church and believers, who from the connection are even more especially taken into account. The "*also* by them" is to be explained by a reference to what the Apocalypse says of the blasphemies which Satan puts forth by means of his chief organ, the beast or the heathen power.

It is said of Sanctus, that he was "refreshed and strengthened by the celestial fountain of the water of life, which flows from the body of Christ." In this there is a clear reference to Rev. vii. 17, "The Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to life-fountains of waters;" xxi. 6, "And to him that is athirst I will give to drink of the fountain of the water of life freeely." Comp. ch. xxii. 1, 17, together with John vii. 38.

As in the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp so here also mention is made of "the crown of immortality," with reference to Rev. ii. 10, where those who have continued faithful

unto death, the martyrs, have the promise given them of "the crown of life."

Of Maturus and Sanctus it is said, "These two, therefore, in whom life had remained whole through the great conflict, were at last *sacrificed*" (*τοὔσχατον ἐτύθησαν.*) It is a mode of contemplating things peculiar to the Apocalypse to regard those who have yielded up their life for the cause of God and Christ, as having been sacrificed on the altar of the heavenly sanctuary (comp. vi. 9, where the souls of the martyrs appear precisely as here, as the sacrifice, ch. xiv. 18, xvi. 7.) In like manner it is said a little further on of Alexander and Attalus, "And after they had endured the great conflict, they also at last were *sacrificed*." And still again of Blandina, "she too was *sacrificed*."[1]

It is said still further, "And confessing, they were added to the number of the martyrs; but those remained without, who never had any traces of faith nor perception of the bridal garment (*ἄισθησιν ἐνδύματος νυμφικοῦ*), nor a thought of the fear of God, but by their apostacy blasphemed the way." The bridal garment is carefully to be distinguished from the clothing which the *guests* wore at marriages, the *ἔνδυμα γάμου*, in Matth. xxii. 12. There is a plain allusion to Rev. xix. 7, 8, the only passage in which bride's apparel is spoken of, "For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready; and it was given her to be clothed with a garment of fine linen, shining, clean. For, the garment of fine linen is the righteousness of saints." In this passage, as in the other, the Christian virtues are represented as the bridal garment.

Blandina, it is said, "rejoiced at her departure as if she were invited to a bridal supper, but was not thrown to the wild beasts." What is meant by the bridal supper is not the marriage feast, but a supper which the bride held with the bridegroom. Such an one occurs only in Rev. iii. 20; see the Comm. there.

It is again said, "Yet their madness and phrenzy toward the

1 The *ἐτύθησαν* is commonly misunderstood, from the reference it carries to the Apocalypse not being perceived. The peculiar style of the Apocalypse had already impressed itself on the general phraseology of the Fathers. Thus Chrysostom in his homil. 11 in ep. ad Hebr. says: *ἔστι καὶ ἄλλα θύματα, τὰ ὄντως ὁλοκαυτώματα, τὰ τῶν ἁγίων μαρτύρων σώματα.* See Suicer at *θυσία* I. 1425.

saints was not satisfied even with this; for, by the wild beast were stirred up wild and barbarous tribes hard to be restrained." The "wild beast" is Satan. Allusion is made to Rev. xii. 3, where Satan appears as the prince of this world, as the ultimate author of all the world's persecuting violence toward the church, as a great red dragon (the *red* denoting bloody cruelty, corresponding to the epithet *wild* here.)

Immediately afterwards it is also said, "Their hatred burned still more, as the governor and people, like a wild beast, shewed the same unrighteous fury toward us, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still." The expression, "like a wild beast," refers to ch. xiii., where the ungodly power of heathendom appears under the image of a beast. With a respect to the same symbolical representation, mention had previously been made of the "inhumanity (*ἀπανθρωπίας*) of the heathen," and of their "acting in a bestial manner." The way in which Rev. xxii. 11 is quoted, as a Scripture fulfilled, implies that the churches both in Gaul and Asia recognised the full canonical authority of the Apocalypse.

Near the beginning of ch. 2, after having mentioned how the confessors neither called themselves martyrs, nor even allowed others to call them by this name, it is said, "For, they cheerfully yielded the title of martyrdom to Christ, the faithful and true witness and first-born from the dead." These designations of Christ are taken from Rev. i. 5. It is peculiar also to the Revelation, that Christ alone is represented as the witness, while those usually called witnesses or martyrs are regarded merely as depositaries of his testimony (see on ch. vi. 9.) This explains the dislike those confessors shewed to assume the name of witnesses.

After relating how the true witnesses did all to restore their fallen brethren, it is said, "For, this was the greatest conflict they had with him, on account of the genuineness of their love, that the beast (*ὁ θὴρ*, used of Satan, as formerly also, in contradistinction to the *θηρίον* as a designation of the heathen power) might be obliged by strangling to spue forth alive those whom he thought he had already devoured" (*ἵνα ἀποπνιχθεὶς ὁ θὴρ, οὓς πρότερον ᾤετο καταπεπωκέναι, ζῶντας ἐξεμέσῃ.*) Rev. xii. 17 treats of the war of the saints with the dragon.

We have manifestly won more here than could be obtained from isolated witnesses for the genuineness of the Apocalypse. We have had a look into the life of the church, and have seen how it clung to the Apocalypse in tribulation and death, as it could not have done, unless this book had been regarded in the fullest sense as a portion of the word of God.

IRENAEUS.

Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, who died in the year 202, is one of the most important witnesses for the genuineness of the Apocalypse.

In a great multitude of passages he quotes it as the work of the apostle John.[1] He everywhere exhibits the most unreserved confidence in the divinity of its contents. Though he had seen the one-half of the Christian world, he still knows of no opposition to the Apocalypse; "he would as soon," says Lücke, "have thought of mentioning and resisting the opposition made to the Gospel of John."

Irenaeus had it in his power to learn the truth regarding the origin of the Apocalypse. It was, as he himself says, " seen not long ago, but almost within the time of our generation, toward the end of the reign of Domitian." In his treatise on the *Ogdoad* (the number eight) he signified, " that he had reached to the first succession of the apostles" (Euseb. V. 20.) He held the closest intercourse with several much esteemed men, who had been acquainted with John. And that these men were also in a condition to give information respecting the Apocalypse, is evident especially from this, that for the correctness of the number 666, in Rev. xiii. 18, he appeals to the testimony of those who had seen John in the face (see on the passage), an appeal which is the more deserving of regard, as Irenaeus makes no use of such authority for the import of the number. Nothing but the embarrassment occasioned by the fact could have led any to deny that

1 So, for example, in B. IV. c. 20: Si quis autem diligentius intendat his, quae a prophetis dicuntur de fine, et quaecunque Joannes discipulus domini vidit in Apoc. inveniet easdem plagas universaliter accipere gentes, quas tunc particulatim accepit Ægyptus. Also B. IV. c. 20, B. V. c. 35. He often calls John the Lord's scholar.

this testimony for the correctness of the number 666 indirectly attests also the composition of the Apocalypse by the apostle John. For, the whole of the importance attached to the testimony of those who had seen John in the face rests on the circumstance of John being the author of the Apocalypse. If this was not the case, they could not have delivered a testimony on the ground of their personal acquaintance with John.

We cannot think otherwise of Irenaeus than that he delivered faithfully the truth accessible to him. Tiersch (Herstellung, p. 317) says with perfect justice of him and Tertullian, "If ever there were teachers in the church, who set forth everything in harmony with the general usage and faith of the church, and held fast what was handed down, it was these two great opponents and conquerors of Gnosticism." The fidelity of Irenaeus in regard to tradition is also attested by Neander, Kchgsch. I. p. 876, as an essential feature in his character, "From the school of John in Asia Minor there went forth an impulse, opposing itself to the arbitrary speculations of the Gnostics, which sought to preserve and uphold in their integrity the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and to separate from them all false ingredients. And it was this impulse which was carried into the west by Irenaeus, who had been trained in Asia Minor in the school of those worthy presbyters, the disciples of the apostle John." Especially characteristic of the whole tendency of the life of Irenaeus is what he says in B. III. c. 4, "Polycarp, who testifies this, always taught that which he learned from the apostles, which the church traditionally delivers, which alone is true." How he hangs on the lips of the depositaries of tradition, appears also from the passage communicated by Eusebius in his epistle to Florinus, in which he mentions his intercourse with Polycarp, "These doctrines were not taught you by the elders before us, who also held intercourse with the apostles. For, when I was yet a boy, I have seen you in company with Polycarp. . . For, I more distinctly remember what passed then than things that have lately occurred, so that I still can point out the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and spake, his going in and out, his manner of life, and the shape of his person, and the discourses which he addressed to the people; and how he told of his converse with John and the rest, who had seen the Lord; and how he remem-

bered their sayings, and what he had heard of them concerning the Lord, and concerning his miracles and his doctrine."

If we had only the testimony of Irenaeus for the genuineness of the book, the very strongest grounds would be required to shake it. It proceeds from the heart of John's circle, from a man who regarded it as a sacred obligation to appear, not in his own name, but in that of the church, and to preserve what he had received. But how much stronger is the case, when the testimony of Irenaeus is only a single link in a vast chain!

The importance of this testimony is increased by the consideration, that what Irenaeus says on the date of the Apocalypse, is found on thorough examination to be the correct view.

A series of testimonies in support of the genuineness of the Apocalypse does not call for a particular investigation; because everything we could desire respecting them is admitted by our opponents. We shall, however, present them together here.

About the end of the second century, Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, wrote a treatise against the heresy of Hermogenes. In this, according to the testimony of Eusebius, B. IV. c. 24, he drew proofs from the Apocalypse of John. That the Apocalypse should have possessed authority with him and his opponents, is itself an evidence of its apostolical origin. But he must also have plainly announced elsewhere that he held it to be a work of the apostle John. Eusebius would not otherwise have spoken simply of the Apocalypse without something by way of explanation.

Apollonius lived about the same time, having been, according to the work Praedestinatus, a presbyter at Ephesus in the third century, which is so far confirmed by the circumstance, that he communicates a local tradition from Ephesus. He wrote a treatise against the Montanists; concerning which Eusebius says, B. V. c. 18, "He also employs proofs from the Apocalypse of John. He mentions, besides, that a dead person had been raised to life by divine power through John at Ephesus." The John who raised this dead person to life can have been no other than the apostle. So that Apollonius must also have attributed the Apocalypse to him. Nor can we well doubt, that Apollonius spoke of the dead being raised to life by John in connection with the appeal he makes to the Apocalypse.

Lücke says, p. 314, "that Clement of Alexandria used the Apocalypse at the beginning of the third century without hesitation, and as if he had never heard of the opposition of the Alogi, as the production of the apostle John." "It is important also," he further remarks, "that Origen, who instituted investigations into the New Testament canon, its limits and classes, and does not conceal any opposition that may have been made against the particular books, not merely quotes the Apocalypse as a production of John the apostle, but expressly says in his Commentary on Matthew, 'What shall I say of John, who lay in the bosom of Jesus? Who has left behind him a Gospel, in which he confesses that he could mention so many things, that the world would not be able to contain them; but also wrote the Apocalypse in which he was commanded to be silent regarding the voices of the seven thunders, and to write them.' From this we are warranted any how to conclude, that neither in the Alexandrian tradition, nor in the course of his theological excursions into the foreign field, did Origen find any sufficient reason for doubting that the Apocalypse was a genuine production of the apostle John."

The bishop Hippolytus, a scholar of Irenaëus, a contemporary of Origen, wrote "on the Gospel and the Apocalypse of John."

"Tertullian refers to the Apocalypse in his Montanistic productions, as in the others, with great decision; he everywhere presupposes its genuineness and apostolicity as fully established. Not a trace appears of his having been led by the Montanist party first to know and prize the Apocalypse" (Lücke.)

THE DOUBTS RESPECTING THE GENUINENESS OF THE APOCALYPSE.

The testimonies in behalf of the Apocalypse are not more conclusive for its genuineness than are the attacks and doubts that have been raised against it; as those can easily be shewn to have no historical foundation, and to have sprung merely from private inclination, perplexity, and exegetical incapacity.

It is not worth while to go into the earlier attacks which were made by the Alogi, in Epiphan. Haeres. 51, 32, sq., of the Roman presbyter Caius in Eusebius III. 28, and those who are mentioned

by Dionysius as his predecessors in contending against the Apocalypse. For in respect to them, it is admitted by the present opponents of the genuineness of the Apocalypse, such as Lücke and Credner, that their rude manner of attacking the Apocalypse, which they held up as the work of a heretic and deceiver, was "a mere makeshift," "which has nothing to do with historical tradition and historical criticism;" "that it did not spring from a properly historical ground (for had it done so Dionysius would not have failed to notice it), but simply and alone from exegetical misapprehension, and the want of a well adjusted system of controversial theology." We shall endeavour to look somewhat closely at the opposition raised against the Apocalypse by Dionysius of Alexandria, the omission of it in the old Syriac translation of the New Testament, and the hesitation of Eusebius in regard to its canonical authority.

DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA.

The theology of the ancient church, when it had assumed a more settled form, applied itself in earnest to extirpate the pernicious doctrine of Chiliasm, which had taken deep root, while theology was still only in its growth. The vigour of this conflict is brought strikingly before us by an expression of Dionysius. He justifies himself, as quoted by Eusebius, B. VII. 24, for writing against Nepos, "because there are some teachers who say, that the law and the prophets are of no value, and who give up following the Gospels, and depreciate the epistles of the apostles; but who, at the same time, praise up the doctrine of this work (of Nepos) as a great and hidden mystery; and who also will not allow the simpler part of our brethren to entertain any great and elevated notions, either of the glorious and truly divine appearance of our Lord, of our resurrection from the dead, of our being gathered and assimilated to him; but persuade them to expect small and perishable things, and such as resemble those that now exist in the kingdom of God."[1]

1 A similar view is furnished respecting the Chiliastic controversy by what is said in Jerome's Proem. to ch. xviii. of Isaiah. After speaking of the great diversity of opinions regarding the resurrection, and what is written in the Apocalypse, he says, "if we

Now the proper weapon against Chiliasm, which looks on the Apocalypse as its stronghold, would have been the correct exposition of this book. But it was not so easy to come at the possession of such a weapon. The arbitrary allegorizing spirit which prevailed, more easily induced Chiliasts to believe that they had a good cause. The production of Nepos bore the title: Refutation of the Allegorists. That which did not impose on the opponents was unable even to satisfy those who urged it. They had no real confidence in it. It was, therefore, quite natural that they should err in regard to the book itself, which occasioned them such embarrassment, and should try to relieve themselves of its burdensome authority, by simply attacking the basis of it, its apostolical composition. This was the path struck out by Dionysius. But there was a certain moderation in his error. While others before him had declared the Apocalypse to be the imposition of an heretic and a deceiver, who had falsely used the name of the apostle, he expressed himself ready to admit, that the book proceeded from a holy and inspired man, who actually bore the name of John, but denied that it was composed by the apostle John, who alone could impart to the book in the full and proper sense a claim to cannonical authority.

He says in Eusebius, B. VII. c. 25, after having spoken of those who altogether rejected the Apocalypse, and declared it to be a godless fiction of the heretic Cerinthus, "But I could not venture to reject this book, as many among the brethren set much by it; but I rather suppose, while I acknowledge the judgment of the book exceeds my capacity, that in all its parts it has a concealed and elevated meaning. For, though I do not understand it, yet I suspect that a deeper sense lies concealed under the words;

understand them according to the letter, we must judaize, if spiritually, we shall appear to gainsay the sentiments of many of the ancients. Of the Latins I shall only mention Tertullian, Victorinus, Lactantius; of the Greeks, omitting others, only Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons; against whom Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, a very eloquent man, wrote a handsome book, ridiculing the fable of a thousand years, and an earthly Jerusalem made of gold and gems, the rebuilding of the temple, immolation of victims, etc. Apollinarius answered him in two volumes, and is followed not only by the men of his own sect, but also by a great multitude of our people in this district, so that I see well beforehand what a storm is going to be raised against me." If we even had no historical proof of it, we should still quite easily understand, that in this hot conflict affecting such important interests to the church, a part of the opponents of Chiliasm would attempt to cut the knot, and relieve themselves by a stroke at the book, which involved them in such perplexity, and appeared as the source of so many vagaries.

which I do not measure and judge by my own understanding, but, giving more licence to faith, I am convinced that it is too high to be comprehended by me. And I do not reject what I do not understand, but I rather wonder that I also do not comprehend."

Stroth has remarked not quite correctly, "that the desire to avoid giving offence was the chief reason that moved Dionysius to deliver his judgment with such reserve and caution respecting this book." The principal motive was rather his own Christian discretion. The judgment of the brethren had so much weight with him, that he would not go farther than was absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of his aim, the refutation of Chiliasm. It may still have been a source of trouble to his spirit, that he could not see his way to the understanding of the book.

But certainly, Dionysius was also a very prudent man; and his prudence undoubtedly wrought along with his discretion. It could not escape him, that a middle position in regard to the Apocalypse could not but carry with it a greater advantage than a decidedly hostile one, when engaged in a conflict with Chiliasm, which claimed the whole of the Apocalypse for itself. If he stood upon the brethren's ground he might expect that they in turn would meet him.

It was, however, nothing more than discretion and prudence, which prevented Dionysius from totally rejecting the Apocalypse. He never drops a word which implies, that, so far as he did understand it, the impression it produced on his mind was that of a truly divine book. We never meet with the expression of a truly divine and living conviction; the utmost he will do is to make a concession. He "could not venture" to reject the Apocalypse with those who regard it as a mere godless fiction. He "admits" that it proceeded from a holy and inspired man. He "will not deny" that the author had seen a vision, and had received knowledge and prophecy.

How, indeed, could any one hold strictly to the fact of a spiritual understanding in the author, which forms the necessary basis of his being a holy and inspired man, so long as he himself still gropes in utter darkness as to the manner in which the divine gift exercised itself—as Dionysius here confesses himself to have done respecting the Apocalypse? How especially could this be possible with a man who was convinced, according to

Eusebius, B. VII. c. 7, that he had the capacity for examining and investigating every thing?

The Dualism, which is associated with all mere concessions, plainly enough betrays itself in what is afterwards said. Dionysius brings forward much that not merely wars with the composition of the Apocalypse by the apostle John, but also with his own admission, that it proceeded from a holy and inspired man. He not obscurely marks, that the author of the Apocalypse in an unbecoming manner puts his own person in the foreground, and lauds his work.[1] The attempted proof likewise of the differences appearing in the Apocalypse as compared with the Gospel and the epistles of John, insensibly grows into a direct attack on the former.[2] Any one who could urge so pointedly as a defect the alleged bad Greek of the Apocalypse (that Greek was the best which was most suitable to the object in view), who was obviously so incapable of comprehending the deeper causes of its peculiar style, and would seek for deficiencies in *it* rather than in classical Greek, which was not fitted for being a channel of communication in regard to the highest mysteries, could have no living conviction of the inspiration of the Apocalypse.

It is quite manifest, that the Apocalypse ran counter to Dionysius not merely as the main prop of Chiliasm. Another reason for his opposition to it presents itself to us in what he says respecting the diversity of style in the Apocalypse as compared with the Gospel of John. He comes direct from the classical literature of Greece, and is still destitute of any taste properly cultivated and formed of a sacred kind. The Greek spirit is not to be found in the book, which more than any other has deeply impressed on it the Old Testament Israelitish character. For him, it has something of a foreign, strange aspect. Dionysius speaks primarily only of the dialect. But the dissatisfaction goes much farther. He undoubtedly utters in his heart what the Alogi did with their lips, "What avails the Apocalypse to me, which

[1] Συντελέσας δὴ πᾶσαν ὡς εἰπεῖν τὴν προφητείαν μακαρίζει ὁ προφήτης τούς τε φυλάσσοντας αὐτήν, καὶ δὴ καὶ ἑαυτόν, κ. τ. λ. Further, ὁ μὲν γὰρ εὐαγγελιστὴς οὐδαμου τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ παρεγγράφει, οὐδὲ κηρύσσει ἑαυτόν, οὔτε διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου οὔτε διὰ τῆς ἐπιστόλης, κ. τ. λ.

[2] Τούτῳ δὲ ἀποκάλυψιν μὲν ἑωρακέναι καὶ γνῶσιν εἰληφέναι καὶ προφητείαν οὐκ ἀντερῶ· διάλεκτον μέντοι καὶ γλωσσαν οὐκ ἀκριβῶς ἑλληνιζουσαν αὐτοῦ βλέπω ἀλλ' ἰδιώμασι μὲν βαρβαρικοῖς χρώμενον, καί που καὶ σολοκίζοντα.

speaks to me of seven angels and seven trumpets." He no doubt also complained, along with those whom he mentions as his predecessors, in contending against the Apocalypse, of the thick veil of darkness and incomprehensibility that was spread over the whole of it. Some time must have elapsed before this false relation of the Apocalypse to the Greek spirit came to be mentioned. The earlier times were more those of simple faith. Men could not but be sensible of the foreign mixture in the language; but the difficulty thereby occasioned was overcome by reflecting on the venerable authority of the apostle, and by the experience of the sweet consolation which the book afforded in times of suffering—was overcome the more easily, as people then used to break off their connection with the classical literature of Greece when they embraced Christianity. A change naturally ensued, when theology began to assume a more systematic and perfect form in the Greek church, when the Greek civilization and philosophy began to be pressed into the service of the church, and, abandoning the reserve hitherto practised, was itself followed as an end. It was scarcely possible, in such a case, for the Apocalypse attaining to a full recognition without first passing through the stage of doubt. New support would also be ministered to the spirit of doubt, when the times of martyrdom ceased. And the elevated character of the book could not fail to add to the impression of its foreign aspect.

Dionysius conducts his attack against the Apocalypse as the composition of the apostle John only on internal grounds, and such grounds, indeed, as call now for no further investigation. His attack is not an interruption to, but rather an important confirmation of, the general agreement in behalf of its genuineness. It is clear as day that no external grounds could then be alleged against it. Otherwise, Dionysius would certainly not have failed to avail himself of them.

It has been concluded, from the circumstance of Dionysius not suffering himself to be swayed by the external grounds for the apostolical composition of the book, that these grounds could not have been of much weight. Such a conclusion, however, is far too hasty. First of all, it has not been sufficiently considered how strong the motive was that impelled Dionysius to reject it. His hermeneutical theory, that the Apocalypse should be

expounded spiritually, it has been conceived, raised him above all perplexity. But it is not considered that he had himself no proper confidence in his hermeneutical theory. And then, if we consider further the nature of the testimonies for the genuineness of the Apocalypse, we shall easily understand how it might be of decided importance, and yet should be held in small estimation by Dionysius, of whom assuredly we could not expect that he would be at pains to search out the hidden traces. With the most thorough confidence in the genuineness of the Apocalypse, which prevailed through the whole of the second century, and which can only be explained on the ground of its actually being the work of the Apostle, there was still no occasion for thoroughly establishing this confidence, because doubt and opposition were quite alien to this century. When these arose, it was impossible all at once to overlook the actual state of matters; it might easily be conceived at the first, that attention should be drawn merely to the book itself. But the matter presented itself quite otherwise on farther reflection, as we may perceive by comparing Eusebius with Dionysius.

A statement, however, of Dionysius is deserving of notice, which is contained in his letter to Hermammon on Valerian and the persecution raised by him, as given in Eusebius VII. c. 10, "And to John was this likewise revealed. And there was given to him, says he, a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemy. And there was given to him power, and forty-two months (Apoc. xiii. 5.) Both (viz. his speaking great things and blasphemy, and the duration of the persecution) can be seen to have wonderfully taken place in Valerian." There can be no doubt that the genuineness of the Apocalypse is here acknowledged. The John mentioned can be no other than the apostle. Dionysius here perfectly agrees with the "ancients," the men of the second century, in recognizing the prophetical character of the book, and the inspiration of its author. He utters the language, not of concession, but of conviction. Now, in what relation does this statement of Dionysius stand to his former statements in his book on the promises? We can suppose a change of conviction to have taken place. The epistle to Hermammon belongs to a later period. It was written after the close of the persecution under Valerian, which began in the year 261, under the reign

of Gallienus, in the year 263, a few years before the death of Dionysius (Euseb. VII. 28.) The work on the promises, however, was composed before the persecution of Valerian. Perhaps Dionysius during that persecution, in which he had many things to suffer (Eúseb. VIII. 11) obtained an insight into the glory of the book, and had his eyes also opened for apprehending the testimony of the church. But we can also suppose, that in his work on the promises, Dionysius, carried away by his polemical zeal, had given expression to his views only on one side, and that he here brings out the other side, his previous doubts having at bottom appeared to himself no more than doubts. Whichever view we take, this later statement of Dionysius shews, that we are not to attribute much importance to his earlier attack.

THE OLD SYRIAC TRANSLATION.

It is a fact, that the Apocalypse is wanting in the Peschito. Nor is it to be denied, that several attempts, which have been made, to meet the unfavourable conclusions that have been drawn against the Apocalypse from this fact, are forced and untenable. We cannot suppose with Hug and Thiersch, that the Apocalypse originally stood in the Peschito, but was afterwards dropt out of it. For, Christians do not so readily suffer themselves to be robbed of what has once been committed to them. Nor can we with Guerike account for the omission on the ground "of the smaller importance of the Apocalypse, and its inferior adaptation for being read in churches." Nor yet again can we suppose with Walton and Wichelhaus, that the Peschito belongs to a period, in which still the Apocalypse did not exist, or at least had not got into general circulation, and come to be commonly acknowledged. For the Apocalypse cannot have been composed at an earlier period than the Gospel and the first epistle of John." Besides, the Apocalypse cannot be separated from the other books, which are wanting in the Peschito, the second epistle of Peter, the epistle of Jude, and the second and third epistles of John. But the second epistle of Peter and the epistle of Jude were composed a considerable period before the Gospel and the first epistle of John, both of which have a place in the Peschito.

The omission of the Apocalypse can only be explained on the

ground, that the translator doubted respecting its apostolical origin, and that this doubt also had made considerable way in his neighbourhood. For, if it had been confined to himself, he would not have allowed it to prevail so far. This explanation has on its side the analogy of the other omitted books. They are together those respecting the apostolical origin of which doubts were entertained in the ancient church. It is also confirmed by the position which an important part of the Syrian church afterwards took up against the Apocalypse. The Nestorians did not acknowledge the canonical authority of the Apocalypse; and it is very natural to suppose, that these stedfast adherents of the Peschito had held the reasons for omitting the Apocalypse to be right.[1]

This admission may, no doubt, be employed for the purpose of damaging the authority of the Apocalypse. If the Peschito, as many suppose, was composed about the middle of the second century, then the agreement of the church of the first century for the Apocalypse would be at once broken up, and we must blot it out from the number of the *homologoumenous* writings.

But the supposition of the Peschito belonging to so early a date rests merely on conjecture. As Wichelhaus justly says (De N. T. Versione Syr. p. 61), it is of "quite uncertain origin;" there is no witness for it before Ephraem. So much only is certain, that it must have been composed sometime before Ephraem; for he describes it as "our translation," and he found it in common use among the churches.

The very omission of the Apocalypse should be taken as the proper starting-point for determining the time of its origin. If it is settled, that the first important opposition against the Apocalypse, that of Dionysius, arose only about the middle of the third century, the Peschito may be dated sometime later, about the end of the century. There are other considerations also that lead to the same result. The learned, and, in part, scientific

1 Hävernick, in his Lucubr. criticae in Apoc. p. 9, has proved that the Nestorians in subsequent times adhered to the canon of the Peschito and rejected the Apocalypse, while the Jacobites regarded it as canonical. He also proves that the assertion of Lücke, "Abulfaradsch is even so bold as to hold the Apocalypse to be a production either of Cerinthus or of the presbyter John," rests on an error. The Apocalypse is still wanting in the canon of the Nestorians of Syria among the Kurdish mountains, comp. Thiersh. Herstellung, p. 429.

character of the translation (Wichelhaus, p. 88 and 263), will not accord with an earlier date. Further, the Syrian literature only began to bloom with Ephraem in the fourth century. And it is scarcely credible, that between a translation of *this sort*, which was itself a fruit of the desire that began to be cherished for literary improvement, and the other productions that sprang from it, there should have been a space of some centuries.

As we must be led to determine the time of the composition of the Syriac translation by a consideration of the doubts that arose respecting the genuineness of the Apocalypse, so we can thus also learn something of the reasons, which occasioned the doubts of the translator. If the doubts, wherever they are presented to us, appear destitute of any historical basis, if they always proceed from exegetical incapacity and controversial heat, if they lean exclusively on internal grounds, we must suppose the same to have been the case here, where we have simply to deal with the fact of doubt. This also is the result to which we are led by a comparison of the analogy of the other omitted books. They are all such as furnished in their matter an occasion for doubt, while no positive grounds of an external kind existed against their genuineness—although, certainly, the inferior external credibility in their case left criticism more at liberty to deal with internal considerations.

That the omission of the Apocalypse from the Peschito did not rest on historical grounds, is evident alone from the fact, that not long after it was made, Ephraem treated the Apocalypse as a canonical book and the production of the apostle John, without expressing the slightest doubt respecting its genuiueness.[1]

EUSEBIUS.

This author, in B. III. c. 24 of his Ecclesiastical history, says, " Among the writings of John, besides the Gospel, his first epistle

1 See the proof in Hävernick's treatise de Ephraemi Syri testimoniis in his Lucubr. Assemanni in Bibl. Orient. I. p. 141, says, In hoc sermone citat S. Doctor (viz. Ephraem) Apoc. Joannis tanquam canonicam Scripturam—quod ideo notavi, ut constaret Syrorum antiquissimorum de illius libri auctoritate judicium. See besides T. III. p. 606, 636, etc.

is acknowledged without dispute, both by those of the present day, and also by the ancients. The other two epistles, however, are disputed. But on the Revelation contrary views are still very generally entertained. By and bye we shall give, at the proper time, a judgment on the matter from the testimonies of the ancients."

In c. 25, which treats "of the Scriptures generally acknowledged as divine (*ὁμολογουμένων θείων γραφῶν*), and those that were not so," he says, after having mentioned those generally acknowledged, "To these may be reckoned, *if it should seem good* (*εἴγε φανείη*), the Revelation of John, concerning which we shall bring forward in the proper time the different opinions. These then are acknowledged as genuine." *If it should seem good*, namely, if the number of the approvers shall be limited to the depositaries of tradition, and all such are excluded as rest their judgment on internal grounds. For only when contemplated from this point of view could the Apocalypse be reckoned among the *homologoumena*. The later quotations also of Eusebius are in unison with this construction. All the ancients, whom he quotes, are without exception for the Apocalypse. The doubts belong only to a later period, and arose entirely from internal considerations. Finally, this is the notion of the *holomogoumena*, as appears elsewhere from the account of Eusebius himself. Thus in regard to the writings of Peter, B. III. c. 3, "One of his epistles, called the first, is acknowledged as genuine (*ἀνωμολόγηται.*) For, this was used by the ancient fathers in their writings as an undoubted work of the apostle."

Then, Eusebius says in his enumeration of the *ungenuine* books, the *νόθα*, "Moreover, as I said, the Revelation of John, *if it should seem good*, which some, as mentioned before, reject, but others rank among the genuine." If it should seem good—if one is of opinion, that the external testimonies for the genuineness of the Apocalypse are overcome by the internal reasons, and if one thinks with Dionysius that the latter decide against the genuineness of the Apocalypse.

It has been thought, that Eusebius should have put the Apocalypse simply in the second class, instead of mentioning it in connection with the second or third. But this is quite a mistake. The second class consists of such books "as are opposed, but yet

are acknowledged by the most." If we perceive, that here not books in general are treated of, which have experienced opposition, but only a particular class of these, such as are still acknowledged by the greater part, and if we also rightly understand these last words,[1] we shall have no doubt, that the Apocalypse could have no place there. The Apocalypse was not acknowledged by the *most*, but by *all*, who are here in the eye of the historian. It was unanimously attested by the ancients, and when in later times doubts were raised against it, it was recognised in the whole church as the production of the apostle John. It was then in full possession.

It has been thought, that Eusebius is quite *vacillating* in his judgment on the Apocalypse. But this also is an entire mistake. His judgment has all the firmness it could have had in his day, if the one circumstance is left out of view, that the unmistakeably divine character of those parts, which lay open to his understanding, had not made the impression on him, which they might justly have done. Clearly and distinctly he recognizes the fact, that the book had the unanimous approval of antiquity, and that the external grounds were entirely on its side. He makes no attempt whatever to invalidate the importance of this testimony, but acknowledges its full value. He does not think of hastily abandoning it; nor does he endeavour by an authoritative declaration of his own to set aside what he cannot disprove. So long as the doubts based on internal grounds could not be successfully disposed of, so long as it was found impracticable to strike out a new path in the exposition of the book, it was right to keep the question still open.

It has been deemed strange, that Eusebius should in other writings have unhesitatingly used the Apocalypse as the work of the apostle John. This, however, will be found quite in place, if it is considered that the doubts did not present themselves to him as at all insuperable; and from the very circumstance of their

1 *Acknowledged* is explained in B. III. c. 38, by "used by the ancients." He there says of the supposed second epistle of Clement, "We do not know that this is equally acknowledged with the former, because we know not that it was used by the ancients." Of the epistles of James and Jude, which are mentioned in B. III. 25 among the books that were "spoken against, yet still acknowledged by the most," it is said in B. II. 23, "Not many of the ancients have mentioned it, nor that called the epistle of Jude, which is also one of the seven called catholic epistles."

wanting an historical basis, they might be regarded chiefly as a call for further investigation. What was in favour of the genuineness of the Apocalypse, the unanimous voice of antiquity, stood firm and immoveable. But, on the other hand, it could not be overlooked by Eusebius, that what seemed to speak against it possessed a quite moveable character, and that in the course of time the matter might appear in an entirely different light.

It has been said, that on the position taken up by Eusebius no certain historical conclusion was arrived at in the ancient church, either as to the point, that the Apocalypse was composed by John, or that it was not. But such a statement could only proceed from one utterly incompetent to form a correct view of the matter. That Eusebius should have quoted the Apocalypse among the *homologoumena* is a clearer proof than anything else that the ancient church had a settled conviction, on historical grounds, of its being the production of the apostle John. If there had been anything that ran counter to this, it could not have escaped the vigilance of Eusebius, who was so well acquainted with the older Christian literature. Nor certainly did he want the inclination to avail himself of it. His spirit could not adapt itself, like Luther's, to the Revelation. It happened with him, as it also happened with the man he so highly honoured, "the great Alexandrian bishop." We see this in his communicating at such length the criticism of this writer, and with such visible predilection. We see it also in his pressing upon Papias a presbyter John, different from the apostle, in order to obtain a second possible author for the Apocalypse, bearing the name of John. He thus sought to provide a stay for the hypothesis of Dionysius, which it still did not possess with the latter. For Dionysius knew nothing of a presbyter John. If, in spite of such a tendency, Eusebius still attests the unanimous acknowledgment of the Apocalypse, we cannot for a moment doubt that the external grounds are altogether in favour of the genuineness.

With Eusebius we shall conclude our examination of the external grounds for the genuineness of the Apocalypse. Later writers could not be regarded as proper witnesses, and we do not need the conclusions that might be drawn from their position in support of the Apocalypse. The results we have already gained are to be considered as quite satisfactory. It has been shewn

that the testimonies for the genuineness of the Apocalypse reach up to the age of its origin; that they are derived from all parts of the Christian world; that down even to the middle of the third century it was unanimously acknowledged, and had struck its roots very deeply into the Christian church; and also, that the doubts and objections which were afterwards entertained respecting it only served to render more clearly manifest the recognition of its genuineness by the church. We do not consider the matter thereby settled. We are not of opinion that the examination of the internal grounds becomes a work of superfluity. But we are convinced, that it would be in the highest degree unscientific, to depreciate and reject a book so accredited on account of any small doubts; that it is a matter of duty to weigh ten times every doubt that may arise respecting such a book, before any importance is attached to it; that those, in particular, sin both against science and the church, who boldly launch forth their critical denunciations, while their own consciences must tell them, that in respect to the exposition of the book, on which all judgment as to the internal grounds for or against the genuineness must be based, they have not so much as entered on the beginnings.

We turn now to the investigation of the genuineness of the Apocalypse as connected with the *internal grounds*. And in doing so shall begin with a consideration of the *doubts* and *objections* that have been raised on these grounds; after which we shall unfold the grounds that *support* the genuineness.

DIFFERENCE IN THE STYLE OF THE APOCALYPSE FROM THAT OF THE GOSPEL AND THE EPISTLES OF JOHN.

The whole cast and impress of the language in the Apocalypse, it is alleged, is different from what we find in the Gospel and the epistles. Of all the favourite turns that occur in the Apocalypse, none are to be met with in those other productions. And inversely. The fundamental character of the language in the Apocalypse is Hebraistic, while in the Gospel and the epistles it is that of the Greek. And while in these the Greek element had

begun to assimilate itself to the Hebraistic, in the other the two appear in utter discordance.

We shall not here enlarge on the point, how great caution is required in handling the proof against the genuineness of a book on the score of its language, and how such a line of argumentation must always hold a subordinate place. This has been sufficiently done by others. Every work has its peculiar style. The favourite expressions of an earlier period are not rarely laid aside. The mind breaks up for itself new paths even in the language. Ordinarily, the existence of differences cannot afford a decided proof against the identity of the author, but only the want of coincidences. Were we here to drive on precipitately, we should in investigating the authorship of the Acts of the Apostles, attribute a decisive weight to such facts as this, that the τε occurs with great frequency in the Acts (120 times), while it is found only five times in the Gospel of Luke. Were we to forget, that we are here on very treacherous ground, we should even deny that the epistles of John proceeded from the author of the Gospel. For not unimportant differences are to be found between them. The most striking is, that the *οὖν*, which in the Gospel occurs above 200 times, far oftener than in all the three first gospels together, is found only twice in the epistles (in the Apocalypse four times)—a fact which will be explained by a *thoughtful* criticism, by the consideration that the frequency of the particle in the Gospel is a peculiarity in the *historical* style of the evangelist. The adverb *οὐκέτι* is used ten times in the Gospel, but not at all in the epistles (in the Apocalypse seven times), a difference which must be regarded as accidental. In the Gospel we have ἴδε fourteen times; not once in the epistles, which also want *ἰδού*, though it occurs five times in the Gospel. Of the four particles, the want of which in the Apocalypse has been adduced as a proof, that the style of the Apocalypse bears a "quite different character" from that of the Gospel and the epistles (Lücke, p. 364), *πάντοτε*, *πώποτε*, *οὐδέποτε*, *οὐδέπω*, one only, *πώποτε*, occurs in the epistles, and even that but once. How dubious the argument is, appears also from the circumstance, that Lücke could found his manifestly futile assault on the last chapter of John's Gospel on diversities of style. A closer examination would have shewn, that every other chapter exhibited like

diversities. But the confidence that is placed on this argument becomes quite senseless, when the two productions, which are compared with each other, belong to entirely different kinds of writing. The most complete diversity in this respect is that which exists between prose and poetry. Solger has said (Erwin II. p. 74), "Language is knowledge itself, in so far as this comes also externally into manifestation; it is knowledge entering under an external form into the world of realities. You can see this in the quite peculiar form it assumes in poetry, where also it pervades the whole language. For not only is it partially changed thereby, but it acquires an entirely different significance from what belongs to it in common discourse." How thorough and pervading this difference is may be at once perceived by comparing the poetical portions of the books of Moses with his prose. Was there not also a time when a purblind criticism maintained that those portions differed so much from the rest, that they could not possibly have been composed by the same author!

The poetical language of the Old Testament differs from the prose especially in this, that it even externally announces its elevation above the common and ordinary, and so puts rare expressions in the room of those that are in current use, chooses concrete expressions instead of abstract, is even in outward form elevated and sonorous, and loves short, abrupt sentences, in which the speech appears only to be wrung out, as it were, in single expressions. In perfect correspondence with this general delineation, Winer, in his Exeget. Stud. I. p. 155, says of the author of the Apocalypse: Solute et quasi frustatim scribit. The prophetical writings also participate to a certain extent in these characteristics of the poetical language (see Ewald Propheten I. p. 46.) Gesenius says, "Those of the golden age come almost entirely up to the poets." In this, however, he goes a little too far.

In the classical literature of Greece, too, poetry chalked out for itself a peculiar walk as to language. We call attention to this the rather as in the way and manner it adhered to this distinguishing peculiarity we can discern a near resemblance to the procedure of the author of the Apocalypse. Matthias says in his Grammar, I. p. 12, "Because Homer wrote his poems in the old Ionic dialect, it was chosen by all succeeding epic poets,

even at a time when the Ionic dialect had long ceased to be employed in other writings.—The lyric choruses in the tragedies of the Athenians approached in some of the forms of their words to the Doric dialect, because the most eminent lyric poets had written in that dialect. In those lyric passages the tragic writers appear to have distinguished the more impassioned parts by the use of the Doric, and the calmer by that of the Attic." Schöll also says, Gesch. der Griech. Literatur. Th. I. p. 67, "The Ionic dialect, the language of an industrious people, much engaged in traffic and commerce, was of a milder, more flexible, and melodious nature. All literary productions raised on the propitious soil of Ionia, bore the impress of taste and elegance. Since Homer and Hesiod had sung in that dialect, it was regarded as peculiarly adapted for poetry of the epic and elegiac cast, while the Æolian dialect and another formed during the period we are now considering were reserved for lyric poetry, which desires more masculine forms, and admits of rougher tones. Herodotus, although a Diorian by birth, chose the Ionic dialect for his history, which holds a sort of intermediate place between the Epos and Prose. . . . Pindar, though an Æolian, rarely wrote in the dialect of his tribe; the Doric, which had received a colour of harshness and a deep-toned sonorousness from the rough character of its people, appeared better suited to the earnestness and dignity of lyric poetry."

Now, there can be no doubt that an essential and marked difference exists as to the kind of composition, between the Apocalypse and the Gospel and epistles of John. The latter productions were composed by John in his customary state of thought and feeling (comp. Acts xii. 11); but when he saw the Revelation and wrote it, he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day (ch. i. 10); he was entranced in heaven (ch. iv. 1); the Spirit spake through him (ch. xiv. 13, xxii. 17.) It is impossible that a book, which describes what was seen in this state and belongs to it, nay which itself was written in this state, should in its language have followed only the beaten track. The endeavour common alike to prophecy and poetry to rise above the ordinary, is manifested by John in the Apocalypse, first of all by his shunning the expressions which in the current phraseology of his time had acquired an established character in the church, and such also as belonged to

the characteristic peculiarities of his own customary dialect. So, the expression ζωὴ αἰώνιος, which was then in very general use, does not occur in the Apocalypse. Nor is any use made of πιστευειν, which occurs far more frequently in John than in all the three first Gospels together, about an hundred times. It is precisely because it occurs so often in the Gospel, that it is wanting in the Apocalypse. Its disuse must at any rate have been intentional; for it is found in all the other larger productions of the New Testament. But πίστις, which never occurs in the Gospel, and only once in the epistles, is employed four times in the Apocalypse; πιστός, once in the Gospel, eight times in the Apocalypse; φῶς and σκοτία, for which John had an especial predilection in his ordinary language, as expressive of moral qualities, are never so used in the Apocalypse; κόσμος is found six times in the Gospel, but only thrice in the Apocalypse, and even there not in the moral sense it usually bears in the Gospel. In the same manner we can account for it, that the preposition περί occurs but once in the Apocalypse, ch. xv. 6, while its common use is one of the peculiarities of the style of the Gospel, and the epistles. But as this has the fact going along with it, that the preposition ἐπί, which occurs much seldomer in the Gospel of John than the others, and even in the epistles is rare, is used with great frequency in the Apocalypse, so the explanation may best be derived from the Hebraistic character of the Apocalypse. The ἐπί corresponds to the Hebr. עַל; but there is no common Hebrew preposition for περί, which is exactly synonymous with it.

Prophecy, like the higher poesy, avoids what gives to language the character of a graceful lightness, refinement, and polish, and yet lays on it fetters, impedes the free movement, restrains the adventurous flight. Accordingly, in the Apocalypse those particles, which internally unite clauses or give a delicate shading to the import, seldom occur: μέν and μέντοι never, τε at the most but once, if even so much (comp. at ch. i. 2, xix. 18); ἄν very rarely. This peculiarity in the Apocalypse is only a higher degree of that which is also met with in the other writings of John. In the gospel μέν occurs only thrice, μέντοι four times, and in the epistles not at all. There is but one instance of τε in the Gospel. The New Testament dialect generally, as observed by Winer, partakes but in part of

that richness in the use of particles, which had come to distinguish the Attic style. This fact is certainly not to be accounted for simply, or even chiefly on the ground of the sacred writers being incapable of appropriating the delicacies of the Greek idiom. If we possessed a letter of John on matters of common life, we should undoubtedly find little difference between the use of the particles in it, and that commonly made in Greek writers. And the same is to be said respecting the absence, remarked by Lücke, of the more finely arranged participial constructions in the Apocalyptic style. So also of what he says again, p. 365, "In the Gospel and the epistles the attraction of the relative pronoun is very common, but is never found in the Apocalypse. The genitive absolute also, the regular construction of the neuter plural with the verb in the singular, and several Grecisms of the kind, we seek for in vain in the Apocalypse." But in these respects also there is for the most part only a heightening in the Apocalypse. In regard to the attraction, Winer has remarked, "The great frequency of this form of speech, which we meet with in the Greek writers, is not found in the New Testament. To the same category belongs the fact, that the Apocalypse exhibits far less of the connection of words of time with prepositions than the Gospel. Prophecy reckons by the great and lets the fragments fall. Directed upon weighty and important truths, it does not trouble itself about the smaller niceties of expression. But in other respects the sacred writings always proceed upon common ground.

Prophecy, in common with poetry, loves the solemn, high, strong, full-toned, emphatical. On this account it is, that in the Apocalypse, instead of the ἴδε of the Gospel, ἰδού is usually employed (in the Apocalypse thirty times, in the Gospel five times, while the ἴδε fourteen times.) By the Septuagint the ἰδού was consecrated as proper to the more solemn style, and throughout the New Testament is used in citations from the Old. In the same way we are to explain, that *great*, which is found only five times in the Gospel, occurs above eighty times in the Apocalypse. Designations of God, such as κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, of Christ, such as Prince of the kings of the earth, the first-born of the dead, the beginning of the creation of God, are quite in their place in the Apocalypse. So also is the heaping up of expressions

such as *κράτος*, *ἰσχύς*, *τιμή*, and such full-toned words as *μεσουράνημα*, *ποταμοφόρητος*.

Prophecy, like poetry, is fond of what strikes the senses. On this account *οἰκουμένη* is employed in the Apocalypse, though not in the Gospel or epistles. So also the designation of Satan as the great dragon; and such expressions as holding fast the name of Jesus, walking with Jesus, washing the garments and making them white, eating of the tree of life, etc.

To prophecy, as to poetry, belongs the property of coining words, in consequence of its creative power in regard to the thoughts. Hence in the Apocalypse the production of new words, such as *χαλκολίβανος*, ch. i. 15.

It befits prophecy, as poetry, to set aside undignified expressions, such as obtain currency in the language of common life. Hence the absence in the Apocalypse of *καθώς*, which being a defectively formed word occurs only as a sort of intruder in written language (comp. Lobeck on Phrynichus, p. 426, and the Paris ed. of Stephanus.)

Elevation goes along with simplicity; and hence we are to explain "the stiffness and sameness" which appears in the Apocalyptic use of words, as remarked by Hitzig.

We are here especially to notice the relation of the Apocalypse to the Hebrew.

The endeavour of poetry to separate itself even in language from the common, prevents it often from employing the readiest materials, and puts it in search of more hidden sources. In Hebrew "very much of what is peculiar to the poetic style plainly sprung from the earlier condition of the Hebrew language" (Ewald.) What had already disappeared from the current language was carefully sought after. The Greek poets wrote in the dialects that were not used in their immediate neighbourhoods. This resource was not accessible to the author of the Apocalypse, and if it had been so, he would not have drawn from it. The separation in style that he sought from what was in current use, must be no merely external one. What he put in the place of the common must have an internal superiority above the common. And this could only be found in the language of the Old Testament.

To be in the Spirit is in a certain sense a privilege of all

Christians (comp. on ch. i. 10.) On this account, the then current language of the world, which for many centuries had been employed in the service of the flesh, could not suffice for all Christian authorship. It was necessary to fall back on the language of the people, who from their first beginnings had been under the influence of the Spirit. Not without reason is the Hebrew language called *holy* in the Jewish writings. A pure Greek gospel, a pure Greek apostolical epistle is inconceivable. The canonical and the Hebrew are most intimately connected. But the Hebrew colouring must exhibit itself most distinctly in the Apocalypse, as it is the only book of the New Testament whose author was in the Spirit in the highest sense; and the constant references to the prophets of the Old Testament, which was required by the design of the book, also naturally led to a close imitation of their style.

That the Hebraisms of the Apocalypse are not to be attributed to the unlettered incompetence of the author is now substantially acknowledged. "Often," says even Herder, "are solecisms intentionally chosen and sought after, often is the construction purposely changed from the proper Greek." Ewald has shown that "the author did not err accidentally or arbitrarily, but usually followed fixed laws.." Lücke remarks, p. 363, "The author of the Apocalypse shows himself very dexterous in his way, and skilful and perfectly free from the rawness of a beginner." Winer also, in his Grammar, says, "Of another sort are the solecisms which occur in the Apocalypse. They give the impress of great harshness to the diction; but admit of being explained. And this critics should have sought for, instead of resolving them, as they have often done, into the ignorance of the author, who indeed in other and much more difficult turns shews in this book, that he knew well enough the rules of grammar. Those inequalities, too, for the most part find analogous examples in the Greek writings, only they do not follow so close upon each other as in the Apocalypse."[1] Who could imagine, that a man so highly gifted, as the author of the Apocalypse is universally allowed to be, living among Greeks, should from mere incapacity have violated the simplest rules of their language—as in ch. 1. 5, καὶ

1 See also in Winer's exeg. Studien I. his treatise de soloecismis qui in Apoc. Joannis inesse dicuntur, for a fuller explanation.

ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός, where a transition is made from the oblique to the right case? (comp. ii. 20, iii. 12.) Who does not see, that the rough and abrupt usage of the Hebrew is intentionally put in the room of the Greek polish ?[1]

From the remarks that have been made, it will be seen that there is an important disfiguration of the real circumstances of the case, in the form of the question thrown out by Bleek, when he asks, "whether it is conceivable, that the evangelist John, who wrote such good Greek, should at a later period, when composing a prophetical work, have written in an extremely incorrect, barbarous style, in violation of all the rules of grammar?" The question is not respecting departures from the proper forms of speech, or of offences against grammar, which are at the same time offences against logic; but only about departures from the empirical Greek usage. The question is not about a disfiguration of the Greek language, but about an essential enriching and ennobling of it, such as was imparted to the German language by Luther, when he retained a number of Hebraisms, and as would also have been imparted to the French language, if there had been produced in it a like national translation of the Bible.

If the Hebraisms of the Apocalypse were rightly formed, as the fruit of design, or rather as the necessary result of the author's being in the Spirit, it is difficult to understand, how any one can still argue from them, that the author of it must have been different from the author of the Gospel. No one can do this in good faith, excepting he who makes his own mental weakness, incompetence, and monotony the measure for others.[2]

1 Bengel in his Appar. ed 2d, p. 488, after referring to the construction of two different cases: In summa Hebraismus toto regnat libro, prima specie insolens et asper, sed revera, cum assueveris, non solum tolerabilis, sed et dulcis, ac plane coelestis curiae stilo dignus. Besides, the harshness in the passages referred to is not greater than in the πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας after the μονογενοῦς, in John i. 14. There, too, we must supply, "who is." The other remedies, that have been suggested, would never have been thought of, if the analogies in the Apoc. had been kept in view. Such harsh constructions are only more frequent there.

2 During a sojourn in Holland in the year 34, the author became acquainted with the excellent and now departed Le Clerc. This person possessed the gift of *improvisizing*. In this imperfect approach to the ecstatic state, a wonderul change took place both on the expression of his countenance, and also on his language. One seemed to behold an entirely different man. Those, who so confidently maintain the "philological" impossibility of the genuineness of the Apocalypse, would be obliged to blush, if they ever met with such facts in real life.

But in the Gospel of John there are not wanting points of contact with the Hebraistic character of the Apocalypse. That the Gospel, and the epistles also, manifest great love to the Old Testament, will be shewn afterwards. The evangelist's predilection, nearly connected with this, for the Hebrew language, is indicated by his using so many Hebrew words with an appended interpretation; as in the Apocalypse there occur Amen, Abaddon, Armageddon, Allelujah. It has lately been well remarked by Thiersch, Neutest. Krit. p. 72, "It is not to be overlooked, that in the Gospel of John the introduction, especially in its earlier part, exhibits with perfect clearness, in the structure of the sentences, in the parallelism of the members, and the position of the words, the rythm of the Old Testament hymns." The doxologies and songs interwoven with the Apocalypse are particularly to be compared with it.

We remark farther, that often the alleged difference between the Gospel and the Apocalypse rests only on a false supposition. As that ἀληθινός in the Gospel and in the Apocalypse is used in different senses. Farther, that sometimes the difference finds an explanation in the historical starting-point of the Apocalypse. How can it, for example, be regarded as extraordinary, that ὑπομονή occus here seven times, while not once in the Gospel? The *patience* must, from the first passage alone in which it appears, ch. i. 9, be an interpreting word for the Apocalypse.

We have already remarked, in the exposition, on the unity that lies concealed under the diversity, in the dialect of the Revelation and of the Gospel and epistles of John.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE APOCALYPTIC EPISTLES AND THOSE OF JOHN.

If John, it is alleged (Lücke p. 374), had been the author of the Apocalypse, the most marked agreement must have appeared between the seven epistles and those of John. But the very opposite of this is the case. The tone in each is quite different. Never in these seven epistles is there found the common address of John, "My children," or "Beloved;" never the repetition of the fundamental thought and that circular sort of movement, so

characteristic of John; never the tender and endearing style of exhortation which so remarkably distinguishes the epistles of John. In place of confidence and quiet trust toward the members of the church, we find here a measure of praise mingled with blame, and instead of the prayerful, earnest style of entreaty in the one, stringent command and threatening in the other. The carrying up of the whole Christian life to the fundamental principles of faith, the knowledge of the truth, love, fellowship, we look for in vain in the Apocalyptic epistles.

But to desire that the tone of the Apocalyptic epistles should be similar to that of the other epistles of John, is to give the lie to the word in ch. i. 10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." The elevated character of the matter, the grave solemnity of the tone, as of something coming down from above, is inseparable from the ecstatic condition of the writer. "An affectionate epistle of apostolic paraclesis," as Lücke describes the first epistle of John, could not possibly be written by one, who was in the Spirit. In such a condition all the strings are drawn tight, nothing moves any longer proprio motu. What is said also of the appearance of Christ in ch. i. 13, sq., is not less opposed to such a desire. If it is Christ who speaks in the first epistles, he who is exalted and sits at the right hand of the Father, at whose feet John, when he saw him, fell as one dead, the familiar and natural tone must necessarily drop.

If it is Christ who speaks, the tender style of address, which was employed by John in his first epistle, could not but be disused.

Then in regard to the "circular sort of movement," there was no time for it in epistles of such a racy description, as was rendered necessary by their introductory character. The proper object of the book, as appears from the beginning and the close, is the coming of the Lord. But if the circular movement is sought in the book at large, and not merely in the epistles, there will be no difficulty in finding it with a natural exposition. It is not less characteristic of the Apocalypse than of the epistles, to repeat the fundamental thoughts, and to give them an always richer and clearer development. (See the Intro. on ch. xii., and in this volume on the thousand years' reign.)

A cutting sharpness meets us also in the epistles of John,

in pronouncing judgment on every thing unchristian, especially when it is considered, that the apostle does not deal in general denunciations, but has specific tendencies and persons in his eye. We may compare only 1 John ii. 4, "He that saith, I have known him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar;" ii. 9, "He that saith, he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now;" ver. 18, "Even now are many Antichrists;" ver. 22, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ; he is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son;" ch. iii. 8, "He that doeth sin is of the devil;" iii. 15, "Whosoever hateth his brother (after the manner of the selfish and conceited Gnostics) is a murderer." Lücke himself, in his Commentary on the Gospel of John i., p. 16, remarks, "He seems to have belonged to the characters, in which the spirit of love, the more fiery and inward it is, the more it has to contend with natural vehemence.—But at a later period also there appears in the character of John far less of the meek and gentle disposition, than that energetic and fiery love, which, combined with a strong feeling of the exclusive truth of the Gospel, is penetrated with the conviction of the condemnation that belongs to the world, and sharply expresses it. If the second epistle really proceeded from John, ver. 10 and 11 would afford proof, that even in his later years John could be very sharp."

What is peculiar to the seven epistles is merely the excited character, which breathes in the words of rebuke and threatening. But this is a simple consequence of being in the Spirit; it is that by which the spiritual activity appears in a manner armed. That the idiosyncrasy of John was especially favourable to such excited states, that he was a man of holy wrath, and therefore a fit instrument for the operation of the Spirit in this respect, appears from Mark iii. 17, according to which Christ gave to him and his brother James the surname of "Sons of thunder," and Luke ix. 54 (comp. at ch. x. 3.) This also is to be considered, that prophecy lays open the secret things of the heart (1 Cor. xiv. 25.) It beholds the most hidden faults in the light of the Spirit of God, and so zeal in respect to the punishment of it must necessarily appear heightened.

The difference would only be of moment if zeal in regard to threatening and punishment altogether engrossed the epistles,

and nothing appeared of that love which was so characteristic of John. But can any one really maintain this? How could he himself repudiate love, who brings it as a heavy complaint against Ephesus, that "she had left her first love," and declares to her that all her energetic zeal against evil would not avail to keep her from the consuming judgments of God, if she did not return to this first love? At the very outset John greets the churches in the name of him "who *loves* us, and has washed us from our sins in his blood." Smyrna and Philadelphia are comforted with an affectionate adaptation to their situation, as one whom his mother comforts. And even Laodicea, that had sunk to the lowest state, and was pierced with the sharpest arrow of chastisement, is at the sametime addressed in the tenderest tone of love, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open to me the door, I will go in and sup with him, and he with me." Not only does the perception of the divine righteousness appear heightened, but the perception also of the *divine love has an energy in it which we do not observe in the epistles of John.* That the severity itself is not the contrast of love, but rooted in it and springing out of it as its source, is expressly declared in ch. iii. 19, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."

If, finally, one desires to find in the seven epistles all the doctrines that are unfolded in the epistles of John, this shews that the position is entirely misapprehended which these epistles bear to the whole of Revelation, and that they are torn away from their connection with it. The appearance alone of Christ in ch. i. has quite a one-sided character, as was shewn in the commentary. Preparation for the great events of the future—this is the special character of the epistles, and hence that was peculiarly appropriate to them, which was fitted to lead the unfaithful and the indolent to repentance, the faithful and zealous to steady perseverance. And then, as the epistles were only of an introductory nature, such suitable matter could not be leisurely and fully unfolded; it could only be given with emphatic brevity, in a few pregnant sentences.

It was formerly shewn, vol. i. p. 132, how the seven epistles are related to the epistles of John by the common bond of opposition to the same kind of errors and corruptions.

THE RABBINISM OF THE APOCALYPSE.

The Apocalyptist, it is alleged by Bleek, "discovers a Rabbinical-Cabbalistic inclination and learning, which was quite alien to the evangelist, and which, according to Acts iv. 13, there is little reason to suppose, was possessed by the apostle John." "His later cultivation," says Lücke, "appears to have been rather a Christian and Greek than a Jewish Rabbinical one. The Old Testament does not come prominently forward in his epistles; seldom is even an allusion made to it, and when there is any, it is to its best known parts. In his Gospel also there are only a few leading ideas and passages of the Old Testament, which he himself, John the Baptist, and Christ made use of in their speeches. The Gospel is a work full of plan and design; but its fulness in this respect has nothing of Rabbinical art and learning, which meet us at every step in the Apocalypse."

This objection involves a threefold supposed difference in the Apocalypse as compared with the Gospel and epistles; the Rabbinical-Cabbalistic tendency, a predilection for the Old Testament, and the artificial character of the plan.

1. In regard to the first of these points, it is not true, as affirmed by Ewald, "that he drew much from the schools of the Jews; that he was not superficially instructed in the schools of the Pharisees and the Cabbalists; that he held in high esteem the ordinances of the Jewish schools." There is not to be found in the Apocalypse the slightest allusion to what is Rabbinical or Cabbalistic, much less any leaning on it or borrowing from it. Wherever the author connects what he writes with what already existed, it is always the canonical writings of the Old Testament with which he does so. *There is no intermediate link between these and him.* He everywhere shews himself an idiot, or unlearned person, in the sense that this expression is applied to Peter and John in Acts iv. 13; a man who took no part in what was reckoned among the Jews of his day cultivated learning.

It would be lost labour if we should set about proving that what is found in the Apocalypse of angels, evil spirits, the heavenly Jerusalem, did not come from Cabbalistic sources. Ewald is the last person who has ventured to assert the opposite;

and any one that may still be inclined to attribute weight to what he has said, may learn better from the solid and complete refutation of Hävernick.[1] That the representation of the new Jerusalem rests entirely on an Old Testament foundation, especially upon Isaiah and Ezekiel, has been already proved.

It rarely happens, that the recent opponents of the Apocalypse utter the general charge of Rabbinism and Cabbalism against the Apocalypse with the same fulness and confidence as the older ones; and in the reference to particular proofs they are much more sparing and shy.

Lücke scarcely presses anything else, than that the Apocalypse attributes significance to certain numbers. He thinks it cannot but be noticed, that "the Apocalypse has manifestly derived the sacred seven and three from the Jewish Cabbala." But this statement is now generally regarded as antiquated. It is perfectly clear, that the same numbers which meet us in the Apocalypse, as having a meaning attached to them, are those which in the books of Moses, in the Psalms, and other parts of the Old Testament, have been in a variety of ways distinguished. (See my Comm. on Psalms, Supplementary Dissertations.) But it cannot be denied, that even in the Gospel of John stress is laid on numbers, and that the most important numbers of the Apocalypse meet us also there. The most striking example is in ch. xxi. 2, "There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas, called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana of Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples." Here the number seven is divided by the three and the four, as often happens in the Apocalypse. At the head of the number three Peter, at the head of the number four the sons of Zebedee. It is only by grouping them thus, that we can explain the separation of the sons of Zebedee from Peter. The seven are also divided by the four: Peter at the head, then three pairs. By the arrangement in pairs, it is intimated, that only the twos are rendered prominent, without any importance being attached to the separate names. The number seven is a given one. But that its being given is not a matter of accident, is plain from the grouping together. Of the same sort exactly is the grouping in Rev. vi. 15, comp. also at ch. xvi. 5.—Not unmeaning certainly are the five loaves and two fishes in ch. vi.

[1] De Cabbalistica, quae Apoc. inesse dicitur, forma et indole, Rost 34.

9 (the division of the seven by the five and two, along with that by the three and four, occurs not unfrequently in the formal arrangement of the Psalms), as also the *twelve* baskets with fragments in ver. 13. The number *four* is found in the enumeration at ch. v. 3. That the five porches also in the account given of the pool of Bethesda is not without meaning, and the *seven* letters also in the name Bethesda, divided by the three and four, we would simply indicate at present; as we are perfectly aware, that but a few will be disposed to follow us so far. Those who are not inclined to do so, because they know only the John of Lücke, who is very different indeed from the real John, may consider this indication as if it had not been given. But we crave serious attention to ch. xxi. 2.

What is most commonly dwelt upon in this connection, is the passage ch. xiii. 18, where, it is thought, a manifest trace is to be found of the Cabbalistic art Gematria in the number 666. But we have already shewn, at the passage, the reverse of this. We have shown, that the number has an Old Testament root, and refers to Ezra ii. 13. We have an exact analogy for this passage in John xxi. 11, "Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three; and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken." That the number 153 here must have a deeper import, will immediately be felt, if the symbolical character of the whole transaction is perceived. The exactness in particularising the number would otherwise have a kind of littleness about it; as Bengel noted it as "something strange, that the precise number should have been announced, which was not done in Luke v. 6, and when it was so near also to the round number of 150, to which an *about* might have been added." There is no room for the objection, that the historical truth must needs suffer, if the number is held to be significant. For the distinction between the great fishes (which alone were counted) and the small ones, is necessarily of a fluctuating kind; so that a certain space here lies open for the theological mode of considering the matter. The deeper import of the number was acknowledged even in ancient times. Jerome points to it, and says that there were 153 kinds of fish, indicating that the church was a net, which was to gather of all kinds. But there is no proof that any one in ancient times had numbered

exactly so many as 153 kinds of fish, not to say that this enumeration would have required to be at the time a quite current one (see Lampe on the passage.) Then, there is no analogy for such a reference to a fact in natural history. All such secret allusions made by John in the Gospel and the Apocalypse adhere to the ground of Scripture. Even Grotius correctly perceived that the number had respect to 2 Chron. ii. 17, (Figura Davidis et Salomonis temporibus, cum 153 millia fuere proselytorum, 2 Chron. ii. 17), and was to be explained by a reference to that passage: "And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith his father had numbered them, and they were found an hundred and three and fifty thousand and six hundred," comp. 1 Kings ix. 20. On the expression "all strangers," Kimchi remarks, "The remnant of the Canaanites, who were no longer given to the worship of idols." That it treats of actual proselytes was proved in the Christology on Zech. ix. 7, where the reception of strangers among the Israelites in David's time was regarded as a type of the fulness of the heathen, that should one day press into the number of God's people. Rev. xiii. 18 stands related to Ezra ii. 13 precisely as John xxi. 11 to 2 Chron. ii. 17. Without the Old Testament key we know not how even to make a beginning with either of the numbers.

Some stress is also laid on the name of God in ch. i. 4, "who is and who was and who comes," and upon the seven spirits which are represented as being before the throne of God. But the groundlessness of this objection has been fully proved in the Commentary on the passages. The seven spirits allude to Zechariah.

But it is manifestly not so much these particular passages, in which the notion of the Rabbinical and Cabbalistic tendency of the Apocalypse finds its nourishment, as the existence of something of a profound nature in these, something of mysterious import and enigmatical allusion, into which the superficial and rationalistic spirit of modern times cannot think of searching. Everything of that sort it throws into the lumber-room of Rabbinism and Cabbalism, although any really corresponding parallels from Rabbinical and Cabbalistic writings are never produced.

But it is not to be forgotten that there is often found also something quite similar in the Gospel, and that, if everything which either has or seems to have a deeper import, must be regarded as Rabbinical or Cabbalistic, the same reproach must be brought also against the Gospel. On John ix. 7, "Go to the pool of Siloah (which is being interpreted, Sent) and wash," Lücke makes the singular remark, "Perhaps, however, the parenthesis is a mystical allegory respecting Christ, the Sent.—Before I can allow myself to think this of John, I will rather, in the face of all manuscripts, understand the parenthesis as the gloss of some allegorical interpreter, which may be very ancient; only no one shall persuade me that it came from John." The resolution is certainly strong, but it cannot abolish the troublesome fact. It is quite plain that the pool Siloah, in name and reality, had a symbolical import in the eyes of the evangelist. The idea has its ground in the passage Zech. xiii. 1, "At that time a fountain shall be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." The figure in that passage the Saviour now embodies in a symbolical transaction. What was then done with a case of corporeal blindness, bore respect to what was to be done with spiritual blindness and its recovery by Christ (comp. ver. 39—41.) The clay, too, mixed with spittle, has a symbolical meaning.

We shall adduce some other examples of a like kind in John's Gospel, which are inconvenient to modern notions, and which many hence shut their eyes upon.—In his own name, John, the evangelist beholds a prophecy, which was fulfilled in his relation to Christ. Instead of setting aside the fact, many profess to be so candid as to confess this to be a piece of "Rabbinical conceit." They may also strive against the inconvenient fact, that the whole narrative in John iv. is of a symbolical nature, that the Samaritan woman is a type of her people, the five husbands she had represent the five deities in 2 Chron. xvii. 24; but for the proof we refer to the Beitr. II., p. 24.

The city Sichem is called by John Sichar a lie, in ch. iv. 5. By the alteration of a letter he changes the *nomen vanum* into a *nomen reale*, and lays bare the falsehood that was involved in the very Samaritan existence.

The sick person whom the Lord healed in ch. v., had been

diseased, according to ver. 5, for eight and thirty years. As the pool of Bethesda with its five porches was a symbol of the Old Testament dispensation, so the sick man was a symbol of the Jewish people, in so far as this people had not yet attained through their dispensation to the full enjoyment of salvation; and the thirty-eight years point to the thirty-eight years of the sojourn in the wilderness, during which Israel lay under the judgment of God and in an unblessed condition (Christology II., p. 568.)

In ch. xix. 36 John refers a passage to Christ, that originally respected the passover-lamb, without a word of explanation.

The indications of a deeper meaning in the Apocalypse which have led to the charge of its Cabbalistic character, for the most part refer to the sense put on the Old Testament Scriptures, and, as Vitringa remarks, "are mystical modes of expression, which have been drawn from the innermost apartments of sacred Scripture." The want of learning, which, in Acts iv. 13, is affirmed of John, does not exclude a profound penetration of this sort into the word of God. For the learning there referred to is learning of a particular kind, the learning that belonged to the Jewish schools of the time. Amos was merely a common shepherd, and yet we find in him the most profound allusions to the Old Testament law. A certain analogy we have in the kind of learning, which acquaintance with Scripture gives even now to those who are wont to live in it. More, however, is still needed than this ground of explanation, and more also than the presumption, that the disciple whom the Lord loved was introduced by personal intercourse with him to the depths of the Old Testament. We must fall back on an immediately divine co-operation in the composition of this book. Were there no other proof for the divinity of the Revelation, this would be firmly credited by one, whose senses have been well exercised to discern the realities of things, on account alone of its treatment of the Old Testament, the *depth* displayed in the knowledge of this, and the unfailing *propriety* shown in its application; whereas in the attempts made with the ordinary gifts of the Spirit to investigate the deeper sense of Scripture, much chaff is always found mixed with the wheat. It holds true of John what is said of Jesus in John vii. 15, 16, "And the Jews marvelled, and said, How, knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them and

said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." Bengel: "The Father taught him it, according to ch. viii. 28, As the Father hath taught me, so I speak."

2. The Old Testament, it is affirmed, is little noticed in the Gospel and the epistles of John. But this allegation arises merely from the incompetence of those who make it, to perceive the Old Testament references in the Gospel and the epistles, which are of so delicate a kind, that for the most part they only catch the attention of him, who is perfectly at home in the writings of the Old Testament; and, along with this, from the inclination to efface as much as possible all such references.

In none of the Gospels are the references to the Old Testament so common, so easy, so mysterious, and so profound, as in that of John.

We would show this first by the example of the section ch. xxi. 1—14. According to the symbolical language of the Old Testament the sea there denotes the world, the fish in the sea denote men, (comp. at ch. viii. 9.) The apostles appear as fishers with reference to Ezek. xlvii. 10. And that a profound reference exists in the number of the fish to the Old Testament, has been already proved.

Lücke denies the symbolical import of the transaction. He says, that "in Luke v. 1, sq. a symbolical meaning was attached by Christ himself to the catching of the fish; but here not the least hint of the kind is given." But it is the very manner of John, a result of his predilection for the enigmatical, the mysterious, not to give any express notice of the symbolical import of transactions; with which also is nearly related what has been remarked by Schultze (Schriftstell. Char. des Joh. p. 192), "Passages of the Old Testament, which are formally and literally cited by the others, are by John interwoven with the discourse of the speaker without any notice of citation, ch. ii. 16, xvi. 32." Here, however, John could the more readily omit the explanation, as it had already been given in Luke v. 10, with sufficient plainness for all who are not sick of anti-symbolism. But the whole transaction imperiously demands a symbolical interpretation. The effort of Lücke to make it, apart from this, intelligible and instructive, can only awaken a feeling of pain. The very first words, "Simon Peter saith to them, I go a fishing; they say to him, We shall

also go with thee," alone possess a transparent character. John would certainly not have mentioned so unimportant a circumstance, as the purpose of Peter to go a fishing, and that of others to accompany him, if there had not been couched under it an image of a higher relation. The transaction could properly find a place at the very *close* of the Gospel only as an immediate preparation of the disciples for the commencement of their mystical fishing. It would otherwise have found its proper place in the main body of the Gospel.

In ch. xxi. 5 it is said, "Jesus saith to them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No." The very form of address *children*, is from the Old Testament, from the Proverbs (Bengel: amanter, et e sublimi, ut sapientia aeterna.) That Jesus asked, whether they had any thing for *him* to eat, appears from the comparison of Luke xxiv. 41. But the reason for the question could not be, that Jesus wanted the means of nourishment. The contrary is plain from ver. 9, "As soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread." It is plain also from ver. 12, 13, according to which Jesus gives to the disciples of the food, which he had already prepared for them.[1] The reason for it could only be, that Jesus wished to eat of the food, which his disciples had obtained (comp. ver. 10), as they likewise wished to eat of his food. Now this points to the inference, that the whole transaction had a symbolical import. And this at once comes out into the clearest light, when we perceive the reference to the Song iv. 17, v. i., ii. 3, the very passages which lie at the bottom of the words in Rev. iii. 20, "If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." We see these words of the Apocalypse embodied here in a symbolical transaction. That the fish are brought under consideration only as means of nourishment, is evident alone from the designations employed *προσφάγιον, ὀψάριον*. The symbolical import of the fish in the main transaction (the draught of fishes) does not, therefore, pass over into this related but subordinate transaction.

From the conclusion of the Gospel we turn to its beginning.

1 The *ὀψάριον* in ver. 13, in the singular, as also in ver. 9, is worthy of notice, the plural being used in ver. 10.

We point to the Old Testament references in ch. i. The expression, "in the beginning," indicates that what John teaches of the *Word*, is only an explanation of the first chapter of Genesis. Ch. i. 3 refers to Ps. xxxiii. 6; ch. i. 14, "We *saw* his *glory*," and likewise ver. 31, "And that he might be *manifested* to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water," allude to Isa. xl. 5, "And the glory of the Lord is manifested (revealed), and all flesh sees it together." It is the uniform manner of John in the Gospel, as also in the Apocalypse, to refer to Christ what in the Old Testament was said of Jehovah. Comp. for example ch. xii. 41, also ch. xiii. 19, where the words, "Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he," refer to Isa. xliii. 10 and similar passages. Jehovah there appeals to the announcements he gives beforehand of the future as a proof of his Godhead. John again refers to the same passages in connection with the first wonder of Jesus, ch. ii. 11, "and manifested forth his glory," and again likewise at the last wonder in ch. xxi. 1. In the words, "He said to them, Come and see," ver. 39, there lies concealed behind the apparent superficiality a deep reference to Ps. lxvi. 5, "Come and see the works of God" (comp. on Apoc. vi. 1.)—In ver. 52, "Verily, verily I say unto you, From henceforth ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man," the vision shewn by night to Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 12), and the explanation given of it in the words of God immediately following, is considered as a prophecy of Christ, the true Jacob, in whom that symbolical promise of the most faithful providence of God, as directed toward the chosen seed, first attains to its full truth.

Not less numerous, profound, and delicate are the references also in the epistles of John to the Old Testament. The very beginning of the first epistle, precisely as the beginning of the Gospel, carries a profound reference to the Old Testament, to the first chapter of Genesis. In the history of the creation the word of God takes an important position; it is that which calls into existence all creaturely being. But according to the apostle's mode of contemplating things, where the word of God is, there Christ also is (comp. at ch. xix. 13.) The expression, "from the beginning," returns again in ii. 7, 13, iii. 8. He, in whose mind the first word of the Old Testament had deeply impressed itself,

could not but view it in a very different light from what is done by our modern school even of believing theologians.—On 1 John i. 8, 9, comp. Prov. xxviii. 23.—On ch. ii. 1, "If any one sins, we have an advocate (intercessor) with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous;" comp. Isai. liii. 11, "My servant, who is righteous, shall justify many;" ver. 12, "He will intercede for the transgressors." On ch. iii. 5, comp. Isai. liii. 4. The reference to this passage is put beyond a doubt, especially by comparing John i. 19, where the Baptist speaks of the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world. On ch. iii. 8, comp. Gen. iii., where behind the serpent Satan is concealed. On ch. iii. 12, comp. Gen. iv. 8. What John would say in ch. v. 6, in the words, "This is he who came by water and blood," can only be understood by one who is intimately acquainted with the symbolical language of the Old Testament, as also such an one alone will be able to comprehend how John, in his Gospel, ch. xix. 34, 35, should attribute so much importance to the circumstance, that water and blood flowed out of the side of Jesus (see my Comm. on Ps. li. 8; and comp. Hebr. ix. 22.) The *anointing* also in John ii. 20, 27 refers to the symbolical customs of the Old Testament. As a symbolical action, and as a figure, anointing in the Old Testament denotes the communication of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In 2 John, ver. 1, "the elder writes to the elect lady and her children;" and in ver. 13, it is said, "the children of thine elect sister greet thee." The designation the apostle here takes to himself is derived from the Old Testament, as is also the designation of the church as a married lady, and its members as her children (see for example Isai. lxii. 4, 5.) It is simply from the strongly marked Old Testament character of this representation that such expositors as are not intimately acquainted with the Old Testament, have failed in understanding its import.

3. The artificial nature of the plan of the Apocalypse rests on a mere fiction; comp. ch. i. 10, and what was said at vol. i. 447, sq., against the view of the Apocalypse as a regularly constructed whole, proceeding without interruption from beginning to end. But the actual plan of the Apocalypse agrees so exactly with that of the Gospel, that we are thereby alone led to think of the identity of the author. The Gospel, like the Apocalypse, consists of an introduction (ch. i. 1—18), a main body, the close of which

at the end of ch. xx. has often been mistaken for the end of the whole, and the conclusion (ch. xxi.) The main body in the Gospel, as in the Apocalypse, has two chief parts, the second beginning with ch. xiii. 1, as in the Apocalypse with ch. xii. The main body, further, in the Gospel, as in the Apocalypse, falls into a series of groups, the existence of which is generally recognised, though the firm establishment of them has not been attended to by expositors as it should have been. It is found on close examination that the seven number of the groups in the Apocalypse returns also here, divided by the four and the three, as there by the three and the four. These divisions also in the Apocalypse alternate with each other. Of the four groups of the first part of the main body, the first in ch. i. 19—ii. 11, contains the beginning of Christ's ministry in Peraea and Galilee, according to the order intimated in the prophecy of Isa. viii. 23, "the region of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles," which Matthew takes for his starting-point, and which required John also to lay the commencement of our Lord's operations in the same region. The second, ch. ii. 12—iv. 54, begins at Capernaum and closes also there; the third in ch. v. 1—vi. 71, the fourth in ch. vii. 1—xii. 50, contain the three festal visits of Jesus to Jerusalem and what was connected with them. Of the three groups of the second part, the first, ch. xiii. 1—xvii. 26, represents how Jesus loved his own to the end; the second, ch. xviii., xix., describe the sufferings, death, and burial of Jesus; the third, or seventh of the whole, ch. xx., gives an account of the resurrection. Artless simplicity—that is here, as in the Apocalypse, the character of the arrangement.

So that we may say in regard to the Rabbinism of the Apocalypse, male parta male dilabuntur.

THE ALLEGED INTERNAL CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL AND EPISTLES OF JOHN, AND EXTERNAL CHARACTER OF THE APOCALYPSE.

Lücke has said, p. 379, "According to the Gospel and the epistles of John, the return, the full presence of Christ is nothing else than the internal completion of his church. Thus, every

advance made in his work, every increase to his society, every victory of his word and Spirit over the world, is an act of his return; and every occasion, in which light and darkness, spiritual life and death are separated from each other, light and life by such separation attaining to internal unity and power, darkness and death passing away into their nothingness, is an advance toward that final judgment, which also is nothing else than the completion and the close of the ever present judgment of Christ upon the world."

"But the Apocalypse exhibits more the external development of the divine kingdom and judgment than the internal; more the divine power and government in the prostration of the Antichristian power than the quiet internal development of the Christian life springing from the power of the divine Spirit and divine grace in humanity; more the external historical appearance than the internal foundation of principles; more the external epochs of conflict and judgment than the internal continuity of their development; more the external prostration of the opposing forces than the internal self-destruction of evil. In the Apocalypse also the *parousia* of Christ is a definite external appearance, the judgment of God an external epoch of the manifestation of God's purposes, and the completion of the divine kingdom more a visible change and restitution of the paradisiacal state, than an internal glorification of the present life."

With this another difference may be connected, "According to the Gospel and the epistles of John the eternal blessed life of believers begins with the period of the new birth, and of faith. Where faith and love are, there the world is overcome and the wicked one chained, there the children of God reign and exercise dominion with Christ. So especially 1 John v. 1—5, iii. 14. All the glory of the children of God in their full manifestation consists in their being made like Christ, seeing him as he is, and being with him (1 John iii. 2; Gospel xvii. 24.) Only the internal foundation and commencement, the internal increase, and the internal completion of the blessed everlasting life is described; but never is any trace found of epochs and periods externally defined and marked off. How entirely different is it in the Apocalypse! The saints have pain and suffering, so long as they are in this world. Under the feeling of their distress, and their

unjust sufferings they cry out, like the people of God in Old Testament times, for vengeance on the world, that oppressed, persecuted, slew them. It is the tragical view of the world that prevails in the Old Testament, from which the Apocalypse sets out. The joy and the peace of the New Testament is rather the distant aim than the standing foundation of the Christian life. It is only after the opposing powers and wicked dominions have been either externally destroyed or externally bound, that the saints attain through the first resurrection to dominion with Christ. But this dominion is both an external one, and it also lasts but for a thousand years. It is to be again interrupted by the loosing of Satan from his confinement. And not till this last outbreak and disturbance has been externally put down, does the heavenly Jerusalem visibly come down with its peace and its blessedness from the new heavens on the new earth."

Baur adopts these representations of Lücke, and sums up the whole argument in the following words, "The difference, therefore, lies generally in this, that the mode of thinking and the whole representation is so internal in the Gospel, and so external in the Apocalypse."

Koestlin has endeavoured to follow out the difference to some other points. "Christianity here still clothes itself in the old robes of theocratical prophecy, which appoints the life and destiny of men in accordance with the notion of recompence as a reward or punishment for what they have done," (p. 482.)—"The evangelist finds the power of Christ over the world in his death, which has broken the preponderance of evil, in the power of the truth generally; while with the Apocalyptist his theocratical power of dominion is the main thing. In Rev. ii. 16, 22, sq. Jesus threatens heretics with his sword, with future temporal punishment. In 1 John iv. 4—6 they are represented as being overcome by the conviction on the part of the church, that she has the Son of God; the theocratical element has retired into the internal sanctuary of the Spirit," (p. 487.) "The coming future of the Apocalypse appears for the most part in John as taking place in the present state of things, partly in the person and efficacious working of Christ, partly in the life of believers and of the church," (p. 498.)

We shall endeavour first to throw into a few brief distinct statements these somewhat vague representations, which owe to

their very vagueness in good measure the degree of currency they have obtained, and shall then examine them.

Jesus appears in the Spirit with John, in the Apocalypse he is represented as appearing externally.

The chief passage, on which the first part of the statement is founded, is John xiv. 18, "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you." We cannot admit, that the spiritual coming of the Lord or his manifesting himself in the Spirit to the disciples, is what alone is meant, although, according to ver. 21, this is comprehended under it, and must hold a pre-eminent place. We find here rather the consolatory coming of the Lord in its whole compass, including also his coming for help in circumstances of great distress, which not only the general nature of the expression points to, but also specially, ver. 3; and the comparison of the fundamental passage, Jer. li. 5. But even if we should think merely of the manifestation of Jesus in Spirit to his disciples, there should still be found a happy agreement with the Apocalypse, which is not less acquainted with this appearance of Christ in the Spirit, and even describes it in the most graphic style (comp. ch. iii. 20.)

All turns on this, that *we take the coming of Jesus in the Spirit in a truly real sense.* Where this is done, the inseparable connection between this coming and the external coming will not be overlooked. Both alike flow from the one source, the joy that is felt from the manifestation of the Lord in his relation to the church. Never has the one been properly believed, and the other been doubted. He that comes internally with his consolations, undoubtedly also comes externally with his help. But there lies the defect. The coming of Jesus in the Spirit is to the modern followers of Hymeneus and Philetus only the symbol of a purely subjective state.

There are not wanting, however, passages in the Gospel and the epistles of John, in which precisely as in the Apocalypse the external coming of the Lord is discoursed of, and with which perfectly accords what was formerly remarked at ch. i. 7, xxii. 7, on the import of the words, "I come," as indicating "the joy connected with the appearance of the Lord in regard to the fulfilment of all the promises and threatenings of this book."

In ch. xiv. 3 of the Gospel it is said, "And if I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto

myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Here the coming meant cannot be a coming in the Spirit, although Lücke's spiritualistic disposition has betrayed him into the interpretation, that Christ speaks "of his spiritual coming again to his people, and of their reception into the full communion of the Holy Spirit as possessed by the glorified Saviour." The Lord comes, not to meet the internal necessities of his people, but to conduct them home out of this troubled world. Euthymius adds to the "I will come again," the words, "at my second coming," and supplies, "after ye have risen from the dead," to the clause "I will receive you unto myself." This explanation is not erroneous, but only too partial and limited. The coming takes its commencement with the death of each individual, and finds its completion in the resurrection, as also in the Revelation the coming of Jesus is primarily an invisible one.

In 1 John ii. 18 the apostle says, "Children, it is the last time." That the last time here refers to the coming of Christ, appears from ver. 28. In John xiv. 16, it is said, "The Father will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." The Comforter belongs only to the militant condition of the church; for comfort pre-supposes tribulation. If the Comforter is to remain "for ever," the militant state of the church must be one of very long continuance. Accordingly, the coming of Christ, which was primarily expected in 1 John ii. 18, could not be the last; the idea must rather be, that *a phase of the future manifestation of the Lord for judgment was at the door;* as, indeed, it is not properly *the*, but only *a* last time, that is spoken of. We have here entirely the same kind of representation of the coming of the Lord which pervades the Apocalypse, where the Lord not merely appears for judgment on the world, but also on the unfaithful church (comp. ch. ii. 5, 16—iii. 3), and appears so, indeed, that he usually gives the world power over those who have themselves become worldly (comp. xi. 2.) The *parousia* of Christ can here also be no other than a properly judicial one. "Where the carcase is, there the eagles are gathered together."

But the properly classical passage is John xxi. 22, where, after Peter had been told how he should glorify God by martyrdom, and without objecting anything to that, asked respecting John, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus said to him, "If I

will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." Here Lücke feels obliged to make the remark, "In what sense Jesus said, Till I come, we can best learn from Rev. ii. 5, 16, iii. 11, xxii. 12, etc. He obviously means his coming or return to judgment." He no doubt adds, "As the Gospel nowhere else mentions a chronological definite return of Christ (?), this expression, Till I come, contributes to throw doubt on the genuineness of the chapter." But the stamp of John's individuality is too unmistakeably impressed on that chapter for any such doubt to be long entertained.

That the coming of the Lord is not the last, the final one, is indicated alone by the conditional mode of expression. This implies, that only in a certain sense John should remain till the Lord came. Bengel says excellently, "When the disciples proposed a question that was not proper, then the faithful and loving Master helped to put them right, shewed them their error, and imparted to them what was agreeable to the will of his heavenly Father, and conformable to the truth. And so he gave here also to Peter's question—What shall John do?—such a disguised, yet, in the circumstances, such a suitable reply, as might well satisfy him. This the brethren recognised; nor did they regard the word of Jesus, If I will, as absolutely and simply a conditional statement, but saw under it something precise and definite, which, however, they carried too far." (See also his remarks in the Gnomon on the passage.)

The evangelist himself also explains respecting the matter, that the coming of the Lord was only a provisional one. He repudiates the misunderstanding, as if the Lord had said, This disciple shall not die; a misunderstanding which could only arise from supposing that the coming meant was the Lord's final coming.

What was more immediately meant was the Lord's coming in judgment on Jerusalem, of which he had said in Matth. xvi. 28, "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," (comp. Matth. xxiv. 34, where it is said, that generation should not pass away till the sign of the Son of man was seen in heaven.) Peter completed his martyrdom a few years before this catastrophe. John, on the other hand, lived to see the first great

coming of the Lord, and became also the herald of its future phases even to the last.

It is when we understand by the coming of the Lord, *only* his appearing in judgment on Jerusalem, that we bring the conclusion of the Gospel into close contact with the beginning and theme of the Apocalypse. The apostle, the only one among the three leading disciples of the Lord, who saw the first glorious coming of the Lord with his bodily eyes, was peculiarly fitted for seeing in Spirit the further manifestations of the coming, and for writing a book which had for its grand theme what is announced in ch. i. 7, "Behold he comes with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him."

But there exists, as appears, a still closer reference in the passage ch. xxi. 22, to the Apocalypse. John was to see Jesus not merely in the destruction of Jerusalem; he must also see him come, when he was in banishment on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. I come,—this is the watchword of the Revelation. This coming is not announced by John as a future one, but was seen in the Spirit as one already present.

If the reference were merely to the destruction of Jerusalem, if there were not involved in this a sacred riddle, John would not be so mysterious.

But what is still more, if Jesus speaks of John's remaining till he should come, he appears to intimate, that he should depart hence shortly after Jesus did come. Now, this does not suit, if we understand the coming of Jesus merely of his coming to judgment on Jerusalem. John survived this event thirty years. Bengel, who only erred, in so far as he did not perceive the reference to the coming of Jesus in the destruction of Jerusalem, remarks, "As it was revealed to the pious Simeon, that he should not see death, till he had seen the anointed of the Lord, so, as soon as he came to see this salvation, he understood it to be the time set for his departure. Nor was it otherwise here; when John saw and described the Lord Jesus as coming, John's period on earth was at a close. For, the chief reason, on account of which he had to remain so long according to the will of the Lord, was precisely this, that before his departure he must certify his friends of the coming of the Lord."

The Gospel presents still another passage in which a yet more definite allusion is made to the Apocalypse, and what is there announced respecting the coming of the Lord. In ch. xvi. 12, 13, Jesus says to the disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and *he will shew you things to come.*" By the things to come here mentioned we can only understand the phases of the Lord's coming in the sense of the Apocalypse, the approaching events in the church's history, and the victory which, under the guidance of their head, they should acquire over the world. Lücke himself remarks, "It is added, that the Spirit should announce to the disciples the future things of the divine kingdom. This is the prophecy of the Spirit in the narrower sense, which belonged to the fulness of knowledge in the truth possessed by the apostles, as hope does to the fulness of the Christian life." "The apostles," says Bengel, "announced much beforehand, especially in their epistles; but what is here most of all referred to is the Apocalypse, written by John." It is remarkable, that this promise of the Lord should have been found in the Gospel of John. The intimations of what was to come, given elsewhere than in his writings, are only of an occasional scattered description. They are to be met with chiefly in Paul, who did not belong to the apostolic circle as it then existed. If we were to conceive of the Apocalypse dropping away, we should at once feel, that the promise of Christ had found no adequate fulfilment. Even from the analogy of the fulfilment given to the parallel declaration, "he will bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have said to you," as it is to be found in the Gospels, especially in those of John and Matthew, we are naturally led to expect a book specially devoted to the announcement of what was to come; and this so much the more, as the prophecy of the Old Testament presented the type of something independent and complete. The Gospel itself thus looks beyond itself to another book that should be peculiarly occupied with the revelation of things to come, as these belonged to the many things, of which the Lord had said to his disciples, that they could still not bear them. In regard to the destruction of Jerusalem and the judgment of the world, the Lord had himself

given clear intimations, so that the limits had been reached respecting the first, which separate prophecy from history. We expect, therefore, that the new disclosures given here shall refer to the events lying between the fall of Jerusalem and the last judgment, and these we shall find almost entirely omitted if we leave out of view the Apocalypse. We expect especially notices regarding the history of the church in its connection with the heathen worldly power, which in the Gospels themselves, and particularly in the Gospel of John, appears as along with Judaism the second great opposing force to the truth, and as such was represented in the transactions of the crucifixion, which bore a symbolical and prophetic character. This expectation was satisfied by the Apocalypse. It forms in this respect the great parallel to that which the Lord himself predicated in the Gospels regarding the overthrow of Judaism.

In other respects also the passage stands in close contact with the Apocalypse. Everything in this is referred to the Spirit (comp. ch. i. 10, xix. 10.) The Spirit there, as here, comes forth *speaking* in the seven epistles, in which he utters promises; also in ch. xiv. 13, xxii. 17. Just as here the Spirit only speaks what he hears,[1] so the Apocalypse represents itself in the very first words as the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of prophecy is but the testimony of Jesus (ch. xix. 10.) The apostles, represented by John, regard the Spirit and hearing as inseparably connected together, in the declaration of our Lord, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice like a trumpet," (ch. i. 10.) Finally, in this also the passage has respect to the Apocalypse, that the announcement of the future in it appears as the highest pitch of the Spirit's energetic working. Prophets are set above apostles in the Revelation (comp. at ch. i. 1); and both the introduction and the conclusion shew how high the book of the future pushes its claims.

In the Gospel of John, it is alleged, *the judgment is immediately connected with sin, while in the Revelation it is represented as the external consequence of sin.* Now, the judgment, which is inseparably connected with sin itself, certainly meets us in

1 Lampe: "These things to come are not to be contra-distinguished from those, which the Holy Spirit had heard; but ought to be considered as a part of them, which the word ἀναγγέλλειν also declares; as it intimates, that these future things had already been heard together with other truths."

John iii. 18, 19. But this judgment is only a *preliminary* one. It does not exclude the external judgment, but rather demands it. At ch. v. 28, 29, where it is declared, that those who have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life, but they that have done evil to the resurrection of judgment, Lücke remarks, "What is meant is, the physical resurrection of the dead, and the twofold general judgment therewith connected upon good and evil." The "last day" is referred to in ch. vi. 40, 44, xii. 48. The "day of judgment" is expressly mentioned in 1 John iv. 17. The Apocalypse also, however, is cognizant of that judgment, which is immediately connected with sin. "I know thy works," it is said in ch. iii. 1, "that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead." The final judgment, according to ch. xx. 12, is to pass upon the *dead*. Any one, that knows what is the scriptural view of *death*, will perceive that the judgment at the last day cannot be the beginning of judgment, but must only be its completion. Scripture knows no other death than that which is the wages and punishment of sin. Death comes in only in consequence of a judgment of condemnation. Those that die in the Lord are, even according to the Apocalypse, free from judgment (comp. at ch. xiv. 13, xx. 12.) This being the case, there is only room for the judgment reaching its completion on the ungodly dead, which has already begun upon the earth.

The Apocalypse takes more into account the external victories of Christ and his church, while in the Gospel it is pre-eminently the spiritual victories that are unfolded.

But the Apocalypse also knows something of a spiritual victory —comp. ch. xvii. 14. It strives with much earnestness to provide the means for this victory, by pressing forward the internal calling of the church. At the head stand the seven epistles, in which the monitory is throughout the prevailing character. Ch. xi. 1—13 is taken up with what concerns the internal condition of the church. Ch. xiv. 1—5 is of practical import. All salvation, all participation in the glory promised to the church, is made dependent on fidelity in faith and the divine life (comp. ch. xxi. 8, 27, xxii. 15.)

On the other hand, the Gospel and the epistles know something of an external victory. The word of the Lord in John xvi. 33, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," lies at the foundation of the Apocalypse,

and is only carried out there into particular detail. In 1 John iv. 14 we have no reason for thinking merely of a spiritual victory; the external is also comprehended under it. The "last hour" in ch. ii. 18 is the eve preceding the external discomfiture of the heretics (comp. ver. 28), "the approaching time of judgment, the *parousia* of the Redeemer as judge, which they only can abide, who have denied the world, and have continued faithful to God and Christ" (Lücke.)

But that the Apocalypse makes account predominantly of the external victory of Christ and of his church over the hostile powers of the world, is a simple consequence of its historical starting-point, and of the object toward which it is directed. It is the book of consolation for the church, as destined to experience tribulation in the world. How such times tend to beget a certain one-sidedness in the exhibition of the truth, may be seen from the Psalms, that were composed during the last periods of the Jewish commonwealth, and also from the Psalms of David, which unfold his sentiments during the times of Saul's persecution. Sacred Scripture would not be a mirror of the love of God, if it strictly withheld itself from such one-sidedness, if the holy men of God had set themselves always to hold one and the same kind of speech, without entering into the anxieties and concerns which agitate the minds of believers. It is by this very one-sidedness of particular portions of Scripture that Scripture as a whole is so many-sided, and has even reached the point of being in a manner all-sided.

The Revelation contains the doctrine of a visible recompense, which is wanting in the Gospel.

We cannot, however, think of an utter want of this doctrine from the relation alone in which the Gospel stands to the Old Testament, that is quite pervaded by this doctrine. How, indeed, could he teach the doctrine of a final judgment, who denies that of a recompense in the present life? Both the two are inseparably connected together in Scripture. But it is easy to shew from the Gospel of John itself, that it accords with the rest of Scripture in confessing to the doctrine of a visible and present recompense. In ch. v. 14, where the Lord says to the man, who had been cured, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee," disease appears as the punishment of sin. In a whole series of passages of John's Gospel, Jesus threatens the Jews with the retributive

judgment of God. The servant of sin does not remain in the house of God, ch. viii. 35. In ch. viii. 21, Jesus says to the Jews, "I go away, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins;" likewise in ver. 24, "If ye believe not, that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." The reference to the death of individuals is too specific. Jesus did not address himself to this or that individual, but, as usual in John, to the Jews at large. Bengel correctly explains: morte omnimoda. That the sins, which lead into death, are, at the same time, to be regarded as the *cause* of death, appears from a comparison of the Old Testament phraseology, that lies at the foundation. The last words which Jesus spake publicly before the people (John xii. 35, 36), still point to the darkness, which was to fall upon those, who did not believe in the light.

For the evangelist the atoning death of Jesus is the great matter, for the Apocalyptist his theocratic dominion.

But how high the Revelation places the bloody atonement of Christ, is evident alone from the single fact, that he appears in it not less than eight and twenty times under the name of the Lamb. At ch. v. 13, "To him, who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb, be blessing and glory and honour and power for ever and ever," it is remarked by Brunn, "In the very form of the Lamb, the atoning sacrifice of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ appears here elevated above all heaven, in order to impress it on our minds, that the atoning work of Jesus is the most important of all his works, and that faith in him alone delivers us." Christ's blood appears as the foundation at once of justification and sanctification (ch. vii. 14), as the source of the invincible power, with which he furnishes his people against the beast and the world (ch. xiv. 1), and of the victory of believers over the world (ch. xii. 11.) Christ's bloody atonement is the foundation of his victory over Satan (comp. on ch. xii. 7—9); it is the root of his whole relation to the church, of the state of glory, to which he conducts his church (comp. at ch. xiii. 8, xxi. 27), and of the salvation of believers (ch. xiii. 8, vii. 17.) The Lamb is the temple even in the new Jerusalem and its light (ch. xxi. 22, 23.)

On the other side, the evangelist knows the "theocratic dominion" of Jesus. *All* the evangelists report, that in answer to the question, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus gave

a categorical answer in the affirmative. In John xviii. 36, 37, it is said, "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from thence. Then said Pilate to him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest it, I am a king." The Saviour speaks more immediately of the origin of his kingdom, of the way and manner of its establishment in the world, with reference to the accusation of the Jews, that by worldy means he sought to found a kingdom on earth (comp. Luke xxiii. 2.) From *heaven* is the correlative of "not of this world" (Bengel: Solum dicit Jesus, unde non sit regnum suum, scil. non ex hoc mundo; unde autem sit, nempe de coelo non exprimit. Innuit tamen, quum dicit se venisse in mundum.) The Saviour alludes to such passages as Dan. ii. 34—44. But from the origin of Christ's dominion we may certainly draw conclusions as to its nature. A kingdom, which springs immediately from heaven, must be one that rules over all. The king, who has such a kingdom, however, must resist all attempts on the part of the kingdoms of this world to encroach upon his kingdom. In 2 John ver. 10 it is said, "If any one come to you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." According to the mode of considering things adopted by John, what is here prescribed to the members, rests upon the conduct of the head toward his enemies, and implies it. We have here, therefore, the germ for all the acts of Christ's royal authority, concerning which the Apocalypse reports, and the foundation for the name which he bears written on his thigh and his garments, "King of kings and Lord of lords" (ch. xix. 16.) The king, whose kingdom is not of this world, must necessarily be the prince of the kings of the earth" (ch. i. 5.)—The words, which stand immediately connected with those we have been commenting on, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," have often been misemployed to darken the kingdom of Christ. Those, who have done so, have not perceived that in these words the Lord diverts from his kingdom, which by his confession had been sufficiently attested, and directs Pilate to the other aspect of his character, which for him was more easily apprehended. Thus Lücke

paraphrases, "I certainly am a king, but my kingdom is the truth, and to proclaim this I have been born, and have come into the world." In that case Christ had done very wrong in affirming so absolutely that he was a king. A teacher of truth is no king in the language of Scripture. The kingdom, which in the New Testament is attributed to the Messias (and this is the point in hand), is quite another thing. It is, besides, worthy of remark, that exactly as in John xviii. 37, so also in Rev. i. 5, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the true witness and the first-born of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth," the witnessing and the reigning are combined together. This is done both times with reference to Isa. lv. 4, where the Messiah appears at once as witness, that is, teacher, and as ruler of the nations.

In the Gospel and the epistles salvation is represented as being of a quite internal nature and belonging to the present life; while in the Revelation it appears of an external nature, and in the future life comes first into existence.

If the matter really were, as Lücke has represented it, in the passage quoted at the beginning of this section; if in the Gospel and epistles a full salvation were spoken of as attainable in this life, what Christian heart would not turn away from the idealistic reveries of the Gospel and the epistles, and surrender itself to the Apocalypse? But how could the matter be so? According to Gen. iii. such a view of the present state of being is absolutely impossible.

There is no undervaluing in the Apocalypse of the importance of the present. High objects are there set before believers. They must wash their garments and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. They must overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony (ch. xii. 11); they must acquire and exercise the glorious virtues, in the splendour of which they are to shine before the throne of God (ch. xiv. 1—5.) To the greatness of their calling corresponds the excellence of their privileges. Believers enjoy even now the love of Christ, who has washed them from their sins in his blood, and has made them a kingdom, and priests to God and his Father (ch. i. 5, 6—v. 10.) Their prayers come up before God, and are heard (ch. viii. 3, 4.) Amid the judgments that alight on the world, God holds over them his protecting hand (ch. vii. 1—8.) They have

overcome Satan (ch. xii. 11); they have washed their garments and made them white (ch. vii. 14, comp. xix. 8.) At their head Jesus marches forth to the victorious conflict with the world (ch. xvii. 14); and the world, with all its persecutions and temptations, can find nothing against them (ch. xiv. 1—5.) But, greater than all, the Lord himself comes in to them and holds with them a supper, and they with him (ch. iii. 20.) Even in the present life the church is the bride of Christ (ch. xxii. 17.)

Koestlin, p. 276, remarks on the Gospel and the epistles, "Rich as the divine life is during the present existence with John, all is still directed to this one point, that they may be prepared for passing into another state of being beyond the present." Christ was sent into the world, that every one who believes in him might not perish, but have everlasting life (John iii. 16.) The water which our Lord gives his people has its peculiar excellence in this, that it springs up to everlasting life (ch. iv. 14.) Whosoever believes on him has eternal life (ch. v. 24.) The Son of man gives that bread, which endures to everlasting life (ch. vi. 53.). Everywhere eternal life appears as the final aim, the prize of victory, the true good (ch. x. 28, xi. 25, xii. 25, 26, xvii. 2, 24; 1 John ii. 25, v. 11.) No worse advocate of the religion, which regards salvation as complete in the present life, than the evangelist John, with whom everything connected with it only begins now, and is completed hereafter!

We have already shewn, at ch. xxii. 1, that a sorrowful tone is common alike to the Gospel and the Revelation. In ch. xiv. 3 of the Gospel it is represented as a sweet consolation to be taken away from the troubles of this vexatious world.

"The internal glorification of the present life" cannot be more emphatically described as the foundation of the "visible renewal and restitution of the paradisiacal state" than is done in ch. xix. 8, 9 (comp. vii. 14—xiv. 1—5.) But John appears in the Gospel and the epistles, not less than in the Apocalypse, to expect an outward glorification. What else is the resurrection of life in ch. v. 28, 29? What can the apostle mean but this, when he says in 1 John iii. 2, "We are now the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be?" Here unquestionably an external blessedness and glory is spoken of, which is to be the portion of those who, by faith on God's Son, are immediately

connected with the true life. We are led also to the same result by everything which John says of the glory which believers are to share with Christ. For, according to the representations of the Gospel, there is the closest connection between the head and the members. At John xvii. 24, "Father, I will that where I am, those whom thou hast given me may also be, that they may behold my glory," Bengel remarks shortly and well, *fruentes*, enjoying (comp. ver. 22, Rom. viii. 17.) The world passes away according to 1 John ii. 17. Of the last day, the end of the world, the Gospel makes mention in ch. vi. 39, xii. 48 (comp. at ch. xx. 11.) What can follow after that but the new heavens and the new earth with the new Jerusalem?

All that is true in the representations of our opponents is accounted for by the special object of the Apocalypse, and the place which it assumes by the books of Scripture. We have shewn that throughout the Gospel there are points of contact for what is unfolded in the Apocalypse, as again in the Apocalypse for what is brought out with peculiar prominence in the Gospel. We cannot desire more unless we would maintain that John could have written no Apocalypse along with the Gospel.

THE ANTICHRIST.

The Antichrist, it is maintained (Lücke p. 383), is quite different in the Apocalypse from what he is in the epistles; in the former a worldly prince, in the latter those who, with every appearance of Christian profession, deny the essential principles of the Gospel (1 John ii. 18, sq., iv. 1, sq., 2 John v. 7, sq.) The name Antichrist not occurring in the Apocalypse is in like manner a significant difference. But that the supposed Antichrist of the Revelation owes its origin merely to an arbitrary exposition, has been proved at ii. p. 68, sq. The Antichrists of the epistles recur substantially in the Revelation (comp. at ch. ii. 26.) The *name* is wanting in the Gospel as well as in the Apocalypse, although the Gospel also was written with respect to the same heretics. That the eingmatical Old Testament names of the Nioclaitans (ii. 6), of those who followed the doctrine of Balaam (ii. 14,) of the woman Jezebel (ii. 20), are more suited to the character of

the Apocalypse, needs no proof. There is, besides, an apparent allusion to the name in ch. ii. 13.

RESURRECTION.

Lücke has said, p. 384, that the doctrine of a double resurrection is quite peculiar to the Apocalypse:—the first, that in which the righteous alone have part, and the second the general resurrection, or the resurrection to the judgment, in which the wicked also participate (ch. xx. 4—15.) Something of this doctrine, indeed, is also to be found in the Gospel (ch. v. 21, sq.) But there it is of a quite different shape and spirit. The first particular resurrection here is nothing but the quickening of the spiritually dead to the life of faith.

This alleged difference rests mainly on an arbitrary interpretation of John v. 21—29, adopted for the purpose of justifying spiritualistic leanings. This entire section refers, according to the natural view of its import, to the resurrection in the common sense—corporeal resurrection. The Jews had taken offence at the healing of a sick man. When Jesus says at ver. 20, "And he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel," every one naturally thinks of works that should strike the bodily eye, and be fitted to affect even the dullest apprehension—works of such a kind, as would render it impossible, but that people should either wonder, or blaspheme and mock. When the Saviour says further, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will," those, to whom he spake, could think of no kind of quickenings from the dead but such as belonged to the body. For, to raise up the dead was the common expression for this. *Raising up* is the general, *making alike* or *quickening* refers only to the righteous. And hence the clause, "whom he will," which has been misapplied so as to justify the spiritualistic view.—It is only when the *making alive* is understood of a blessed resurrection, that it naturally and easily joins to what is said of the *judgment* in the subsequent context. The judgment consists in granting and not granting a blessed resurrection.—Finally, all doubt is excluded by vers. 28 and 29. Even Lücke is obliged to admit, that these verses treat of what is altogether future, and indeed of the double resurrection and the final judgment. But it is perfectly

clear, that they merely form the summing up in conclusion of what had gone before. This is rendered more obvious by the "marvel not" at the beginning, which resumes the expression in ver. 20, "that ye may marvel."—The expression in ver. 25, "and now is," which is pressed by those who adopt the spiritualistic interpretation, is to be explained on the ground, that as in all other cases, so also here, the foundation in respect to the future was laid in the present, as the resurrections accomplished by Christ on particular persons bear evidence. But the future prevails. There is but a brief allusion to the beginning and the pledge, the symbolical representation and the matter-of-fact prophecy, in what takes place during the present life.—How strong the spiritualistic tendency is, which has called forth the view we oppose, and given rise to what Lücke himself calls "the heterodox interpretation," is evident alone from the consideration that the expression in Matth. xi. 5, Luke vii. 22, "the dead are raised up," has been held to mean merely the awakening to spiritual life.

That the first and the second resurrection in the Apocalypse denote the same two stages of salvation, which are also mentioned in the Gospel of John, has been shewn at ch. xx. 5. The only thing peculiar to the Revelation, or rather to the particular passage under consideration, is, that it applies figuratively the word resurrection also to the first stage. The reason for doing so was investigated in the commentary. There is also a difference in this, that the Revelation knows only of a resurrection of the righteous, while the Gospel uses the expression in regard also to the wicked. But we shewed at ch. xx. 13, that the emphatic use of the resurrection along with the general one is found also in the Gospel; and further, why it is that the Revelation contains the latter.

ANGELS.

"While angels"—it is alleged by Lücke, p. 387—appear in the Gospel only as the agents of divine providence, they are represented in the Apocalypse as the bearers of God's revelations, which according to the Gospel are communicated only through Christ, his word and his Spirit." Nor is it according to the manner of John, to represent "the angels, entirely in the style of the later notices respecting angels in the Old Testament, as having

their place amid the common appearances of nature, the elements (ch. ix. 1, xiv. 8, xvi. 5); nay, as being set over particular communities (ch. i. 20, ii. 1.) In the Gospel of John the angels always appear in the spiritual ethical sphere, as servants of a special divine providence."

We must here, however, put aside ch. ix. 1, i. 20, ii. 1, as being manifestly brought in on a wrong interpretation, and having nothing, indeed, to do with angels.

The angels are certainly not mentioned in the Gospel specially and expressly as the "bearers of God's revelations." But if we take into account the relation, in which John stands generally to the Old Testament, and in particular to those prophets, with whom—as remarked at ch. i. 1—the mediation of an angel in the revelations imparted to them comes most prominently out, Daniel and Zecharch (comp. in regard to Zech. ch. xii. 14, 15, xix. 37, and in regard to Daniel ch. i. 51), we shall not be able to doubt, that what John did not mention, because no proper opportunity presented itself for it, he still recognized. We are led to the same result by John i. 51, where the Lord says, "Verily, verily I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man." Lücke admits, that the ascending and descending of the angels conveys the idea of an uninterrupted intercourse between the opened heaven and the Son of man through the angels. The largest room is here given to the angelic agency in connection with the extension of Christ's kingdom. It reaches as far as the empire of the Son of man (Rev. i. 13.) Considering the high importance of the book for the kingdom of Christ, the angels could not possibly be regarded as without any participation in it, and that their agency should be expressly and repeatedly mentioned, is in accordance with the plastic and palpable character of the vision. The limitation of the angels to a particular territory, has evidently, as appears from that decisive passage in the first chapter of the Gospel, no support from John; it belongs to that rationalizing tendency, which would entirely discard the angels; and because it cannot do so without coming into open conflict with Scripture, still tries to get rid of some particular bits of this stone of stumbling. It is also to be noted, that the agency of angels in the Apocalypse, as regards the revelations made, is entirely of a

mediatory description. The angel is spoken of as John's fellow-servant (ch. xix. 10, xxii. 9), while Christ and his Spirit always appear as the proper source of the prophecy (comp. at ch. i. 1, xix. 10, xxii. 16, 17.)

The exclusion of angels from material operations is quite arbitrary. These form no contrast to what is spiritual or ethical; but the comprehensive agency of the angels in regard to the latter is so ordered, that the former also cannot be inaccessible to them. "The strong heroes who fulfil God's word" (Ps. ciii. 20), would ill deserve their name, if the material part of creation stood against them like a brazen wall. What is written of the angels in Ps. xci. 11, 12, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone," would certainly be embraced by John with a child-like faith. Even toward the commencement of our Lord's history we find an active and particular operation of angels connected with material things; they *ministered* to Jesus after his temptation (Matth. iv. 11), that is, supplied him with meat and drink. And the Lord speaks in Matth. xxvi. 53 of twelve legions of angels, that the Father was willing to give him, if he sought them, to aid him in his conflict with the power of the world.

The angel that moved the water (John v. 4) had a still more material sphere assigned him, than the angel of the waters in Rev. xvi. 5, though the latter was very closely connected with him. For there the water is spoken of in the figurative sense, and the thought is, that the angels have their share in opening and shutting the sources of life's support, to which also water in the literal sense undoubtedly belongs.

The fire, over which the angel in ch. xiv. 18 has power, is the fire of the Divine wrath and judgment. Material fire comes into consideration, only in so far as it is among the means of punishment which are employed by God. The doctrine is this, that even in executing the divine judgments the angels have a part to do corresponding to their character as "ministering spirits."

Hence the angels took part in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: "We destroy this place," they said, "because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it." The language is similar in regard to

the Egyptian plagues, "He sent against them the heat of his anger, wrath and indignation and trouble, a host of evil angels" (Ps. lxxviii. 49, comp. Ex. xii. 13, 23.)

INTERNAL GROUNDS FOR THE GENUINENESS OF THE APOCALYPSE.

What we are going to furnish here is only to be regarded as a supplement to the considerations which, we are persuaded, have completely overthrown the view of our opponents.

And we shall first bring together what is obtained from a *comparison of the Apocalypse with the other writings of John.*

It is common to the Apocalypse with these, that it is distinguished by the wonderful pregnancy and vividness of its style of representation. We may perfectly apply to the Apocalypse, what Steinhofer has said more immediately in reference to the first epistle (Betrachtungen über den 1 Br. des Joh. p. 63), "We find in this epistle clear full words (voces praegnantes), since each word not only contains the whole matter in itself, but also suits the manifold circumstances that may occur in connection with it; as, for example, when it is said, He that is of God abides in God. They are sayings of such a kind as immediately awaken suitable feelings, and produce a living impression and spiritual sense of the matter. One may paraphrase and explain such short sayings, or express them in other words; but to a spiritual heart the biblical expressions themselves give what nothing else can supply." In this connection let us only think of the Lamb, of the lion of the tribe of Judah, of the word, "But I have somewhat against thee, that thou hast left thy first love," of Laodicea's being neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, of the charge, "Hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown," or, of his standing before the door and knocking, and supping with those who let him in.

"John's mode of address," remarks Steinhofer farther, "is very kindly and tender. We are made constantly sensible of his loving disposition. His exhortations and warnings are thus, as it were, spiced and made the more palatable. He always addresses himself to the hearts of his readers, and along with his instructions imparts to them his affection and fatherly love. Hence,

there is a *pathos* in the epistle." We have already had occasion to shew, that the Apocalypse partakes of this affectionate and cordial manner. The author's depth of love is manifest alone from the circumstance, that he bears on his heart the sufferings of all Christendom as his own.

"In order to rebuke seducers more sharply, to smite them, as it were, with a clap of thunder, he, like a son of thunder, calls them flatly liars, children of the devil, antichrists. Of the same sort are such expressions as, 'We lie,' 'he is a liar,' &c. It is his love to Jesus and his desire for the salvation of souls, which makes him deal so sharply with sin and impurity. At the same time he always adds something for the sake of weak and timid hearts, lest through needless anxieties they should be deprived of their full comfort; as at ch. i. 7, ii. 2."

This sharpness and severity of John in regard to Antichristian error and sin, has been in various ways misunderstood. A superficial turn of mind must at any cost hold it to be a supplanting of love. Yet the truth has always broken forth anew. J. D. Michaelis proposes, that we should blot out of John's character the much-praised quality of meekness. Berger cannot forbear to regard John as intolerant in his disposition. Schultze (Der Schriftst. des Joh., p. 328), says, "We cannot fail also, from the polemical spirit which appears in nearly all the discourses of Jesus preserved in John's Gospel, and from the reproaches which Jesus continually casts on the Jews, to draw unfavourable conclusions regarding the meekness of the historian, especially as in John other persons also speak in a similarly bitter and polemical tone." He remarks that personal love is in its very nature somewhat intolerant. Koestlin says, p. 40, "The contrast, in which John places Christianity to the two other religions of his day, is much sharper and more decided than in the other writers of the New Testament. With him Christianity alone is 'the truth,' as opposed to 'lies;' it is 'the life,' out of which there is nothing but 'death;' 'the light' which is surrounded on every hand with 'darkness.' . . . Every thing with John falls into two opposite spheres: the one of which contains whatever is divine, the other whatever is the reverse."

That this distinguishing feature is found in the Apocalypse is too plain to require any proof. The sharpness with which it

separates between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan, and the sternness by which easy good-nature, faint-heartedness, the disposition merely to live and let live, has felt itself most deeply wounded, is one of the leading motives that have impelled many to contend against its apostolical origin. From the historical starting-point of the book and its great design, this peculiarity could not fail to come out more palpably and appear more strongly marked than in the other productions of John, especially than in the epistles, which hold much the same relative place as the last discourses of Christ to his disciples in the Gospel. But this is still to be held fast, that the *decision which is shewn in rejecting everything which does not carry on its front the seal of Christ, and sets itself up against him, is a bond that unites most closely the Gospel and epistles of John to the Apocalypse.* Nor is the decision of that passionate character, which led Peter to cut off the ear of Malchus, but rather that melancholy decision, which is deeply rooted in the inner man, and, remaining constantly alike, breaks forth anew on every occasion that arises.

In union with the holy severity—common to all the productions of John—which is always found where there is burning personal love to Jesus,[1] and which differs from *natural* severity by carrying along with it manifest proofs of heartfelt love to Jesus and to the brethren, there is also common to the Gospel and the Apocalypse a *fondness for the polemical.* "Here as there (says Baur, p. 380), there is the unfolding of a great conflict, in which the idea of Christianity realizes itself. There (in the Apocalypse) it is the conflict with Antichristian heathenism; here (in the Gospel) it is the conflict with unbelieving Judaism, which Jesus himself had to withstand." The parallelism is the more complete, as in the Gospel the conflict with Judaism, not less than the conflict with heathenism in the Gospel, appears to be one directed against Satan (comp. John viii. 44, xiii. 27, xiv. 30); and as the Apoca-

[1] How the Apocalypse in this agrees with the Gospel, appears not only from the passages formerly quoted, but also from the fondness shewn to the designation of Christ by the Lamb—the tenderest that is found in the whole of the New Testament—and such passages as ch. xxii. 17. 20. Lampe justly finds the strongest proof of John's love to Jesus in his being characterized as the disciple whom Jesus loved; as this undoubtedly arose from John's being animated and filled with a fervent affection toward Jesus.

lypse also makes mention of Judaism as the second hostile power after heathenism (comp. ii. 9, iii. 9); and deduces its persecutions from Satan (comp. xii. 5, ii. 9.)

An air of sadness is diffused over the Gospel of John, as it is also over the Apocalypse. This meets us in the strongest form in the closing words of the first part of the main body (ch. xii. 37, sq.), which, from their assuming so much the form of a conclusion, deserve the more attention. As to the reason of this sadness, we may find it in the words of Isaiah there quoted, "Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" It is a testimony to the evangelist's deep insight, on the one hand, into the glory of Christ, and, on the other, into the grievous corruption of human nature. On the words, "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him," comp. Rev. ix. 20—xvi. 9, 11, 21.

It is admitted on all hands that the *dark, mysterious, enigmatical character of the Apocalypse, placing it beyond the reach of the natural understanding*, is a distinctive peculiarity of the Apocalypse. But the same mark is to be found also in the Gospel of John, in a degree beyond that of any other book in the canon of the New Testament, and likewise in his epistles. Rationalism has in all ages taken offence at this peculiarity of John, from the Socinians[1] down to Wegscheider, who declares the Gospel of John to be a mystical clare-obscure, possessing more warmth than light, and combining obscurity of ideas with clearness of expression. From some of the leading authorities of the Rationalistic school having declared themselves decidedly on the side of the Gospel, this accusation ceased for a long time to be heard; but it has been again revived by Bauer and others. The exposition of Lücke laboured hard to remove out of the way what gave occasion to it. The peculiarity, however, is still admitted by those who occupy the stand-point of this exposition. Thus Frommann says, p. 57, "The synoptical discourses of our Lord appear in their parabolical or gnomological expression as most thoroughly clear and intelligible even to the popular mind, while,

1 Thus Ge. Enjedin says in his Proem. on John: Si obscuritas concisa, abrupta, minime sibi cohaerens, et ex allegoriis constans oratio sublimitas dicenda sit, fateor Johannem esse sublimem, nam vix ullam Christi concionem ab eo relatam invenias, quae tota non sit allegorica intellectu difficillima.

on the contrary, the expressions of the Redeemer in John are allegorical, and, as compared with the others, of an abstract, mystical, and obscure description." He explains this peculiarity by supposing that John had appropriated only that portion which was "most adapted to his peculiarly subjective, mystical, and reflective nature." In the ancient church this peculiarity gave rise to the saying, that John prepared himself by fasting and prayer for receiving the Gospel, in which the church at his solicitation united with him.[1]—In none of the Gospels is it so often said, that Jesus was not understood, as that of John (comp. ch. viii. 27, x. 6, xiv. 5, xvi. 18); and these notices refer not merely to the rude multitude, but also to the disciples. The annoyance caused by the mystical darkness calls forth among the former the charge of hallucination or madness (ch. viii. 52.) The passages ch. vi. 60, "Many of his disciples who heard it, said, This is an hard saying, who can hear it," and ch. x. 20, "He has a devil and is mad, why do you hear him," express precisely what is commonly felt in regard to the Apocalypse. The sayings of Jesus are often expressly described as enigmatical; comp. ch. x. 6, "This riddle (παροιμία, properly anything that lies out of the way, that surpasses the rational discernment, the common understanding) spake Jesus to them, but they understood not what things they were, which he spake to them;" ch. xvi. 25, "These things I have spoken to you in riddles" (parables); ver. 29, "Lo now thou speakest to us plainly, and speakest no riddles," where the disciples rejoice, that Jesus had come at length into the region, where they found themselves at home. So enigmatical are the discourses of Christ in John, that the evangelist himself not unfrequently acts the part of interpreter (for example, in ch. xii. 33), yet even when this is done, the Gospel does not lose its mysterious character. Thus in Christ's declaration at ch. ii. 19, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again," there is set forth a sacred riddle, the solution of which depended on the knowledge, that there was an essential identity between

1 Jerome, in the preface to the Gospel of Matthew: Unde et ecclesiastica narrat historia, cum a fratribus cogeretur ut scriberet, ita facturum esse respondisse, si indicto jejunio in commune omnes deum deprecarentur. Quo expleto revelatione saturatus illud proemium e coelo veniens eructavit: In principio erat verbum, et verbum erat apud deum, et deus erat verbum.

the temple, the church, and the manifestation of Christ in the flesh. The omission of that saying in the other Gospels is not to be ascribed to ignorance, but to intention, as the false witnesses afterwards referred to it (Mark xiv. 58.) But the explanation given by John in ver. 21 is not less enigmatical than the saying itself. The explanation likewise in ch. vii. 39 is of an enigmatical nature. And the other remarks, which John interweaves with his narrative, are for the most part of the same sort (comp. for example, ch. xii. 41.)

The Apocalypse has in common with the Gospel and the epistles the *want of the gift of accommodation*, of the power of being to the Jews a Jew and to the Greeks a Greek, the contemplative and reserved spirit, which imposes on every one, who would participate in the high gifts possessed by the author, the necessity of seeking it in his own retirement. We could not fancy the author either of the Gospel or of the Apocalypse being in such a position, as Paul occupied at Athens, as described in Acts xvii.

There are also in the Gospel unmistakeable traces of the *symbolical spirit* in which the Apocalypse is written. We have already shewn what an important place symbolical action takes in the Gospel. In ch. xiii. 26, "Jesus answered, he it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon," the word in the Psalm, "he that eats my bread," is visibly represented and embodied in a symbolical transaction. The symbolical character of the healing of the man born blind was announced by Jesus himself in ch. ix. 39. An intimation of the same kind was given regarding the resurrection of Lazarus in ch. xi. 25. That the washing of the disciples' feet possesses a symbolical character, is so manifest, that no one can doubt it, though according to John's manner it is not expressly declared; as also in ver. 5 the passage 2 Sam. xx. 1 is not expressly cited, to which allusion is made in the words, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." The foundation of the whole symbolical transaction is this, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow," of Ps. li. 9. This prayer, which the first David poured out in the name of the church, is answered by the symbolical action of the second David. Nearly related to the symbolical transactions are the numerous allegories, for example,

of the light of the world, of the bread of life, of the water of life, of the vine, and the good shepherd. So also the images and comparisons, such as those of the seed-corn, of the woman that travailleth, of the way and the life.

But even where the symbolical spirit in the Gospel does not discover itself, there still appears an intimate connection between it and the Apocalypse, in this respect, that *things outwardly beheld are constantly assimilated internally by the spirit of contemplation;* that we everywhere have before us the true and the ideal, that is, the true, which is ideal, and the ideal which is true—everywhere something analogous to the visions in the Apocalypse, which have much less in common with the three first evangelists. The words of Baur, p. 380, "It may be justly said, the Gospel is also an Apocalypse, in which the Spirit is not discursively active, but lives in the region of intuition, is embosomed in a series of thoughts and images peculiarly great and rich in matter," admit of a good as well as a bad sense, and one in which we can fully appropriate them.

The *last verse of the Gospel* is connected by an internal bond with the Apocalypse, which a short-sighted criticism has sought in vain to despise, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Some have here talked of "a hyperbole at variance with the simplicity and considerateness of John." But there is properly no hyperbole. The internal transcendent greatness appears in the drapery of the external, takes to itself large dimensions, after the example of Amos vii. 10, where Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, says to Jeroboam, "Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel, the land is not able to bear all his words," it is not large enough for them, they cannot get space in it. That the external here is only employed as means for representing the internal, that we must distinguish between the idea and its clothing, is evident alone from the "I suppose." (Bengel: οἶμαι, opinor, hoc verbo mitigatur amplificatio.) The idea is that of the absolute incapacity of the world for the spiritual reception and preparation of a complete history of Christ. An hyperbole could only be thought of, if this incapacity were not really an absolute one. Now, in a perfectly similar way

is the external often employed as the means of representing the spiritual, especially in the description of the New Jerusalem, the glory of which (for example) appears in the form of its enormous height (300 miles), as also in the constitution of the gates, each one of which consists of a single pearl. Ch. ix. 16 also in a sense belongs to the same class, as it speaks of a host "twice ten thousand times ten thousand." The idea of the *terrible* character of God's warlike and avenging force assumes here, as it were, flesh and blood in the incredible number of the forces employed.

As the Gospel of John constantly *penetrates into the depths*, and takes the *most comprehensive view*, so also does the Apocalypse. The Gospel was designated by the ancients the theological or pneumatical Gospel, (see vol. i. p. 37.) This character manifests itself most strikingly at the beginning. The evangelist here presses into the depths of the Godhead. He determines the relation of Christ to the Father, and likewise to the whole creation. The opened mystery of the Word, which was in the beginning, accompanies us through the whole of the narrative that follows, and we constantly meet with notices and allusions, which point us anew to this mystery (comp. for ex. ch. iii. 13.) The work of redemption is surveyed in its whole compass (comp. ch. x. 16, xi. 51, 52.) The conflict of particular persons against the Gospel is introduced in a more comprehensive connection. The individuals are lost in the more profound consideration of the class to which they belonged. It is the opposition of Judaism to the kingdom of Christ. The difference of the three other Gospels presents itself even externally, if we compare the number of times that the word *Jews* occurs in John and in them.[1] But John does not stand even at the Jews; he rises from them to Satan himself.—In the Apocalypse the Jews of the Gospel again return in a passing way, ch. ii. 9, iii. 9. The heathen go along with them, ii. 26, xi. 18, xx. 3.[2] The conflict of heathenism with the Gospel of Christ is the great theme of the Apocalypse. No trace is to be found in it of Domitian as an individual. He is

1 Bengel took notice of the fact at John i. 19, but quite erred in the explanation he gave of it: Matthaeus, Marcus et Lucas Judaeorum appellationem raro ponunt, Johannes saepissime. Videlicet, illi primos lectores Judaeos sibi proposuere, Johannes fideles ex gentibus.

2 The frequency of "the Jews" in the Gospel of John has its correspondence in that of "the heathen" in the Apocalypse.

merged in the general class, to which he belonged, the ungodly Roman State. This ungodly power of the present is, again, classed with those of the past and the future. The Roman power appears only as a single head of the seven-headed beast. His earthly tool, the false prophet, bears in like manner a comprehensive character. But the prophet rises above both to the contemplation of Satan, as the grand capital enemy, to whom these others merely serve as instruments. His eye takes in the entire field of the world's history. As his Gospel begins with him, "who was in the beginning," so the Apocalypse concludes with what shall be at the end, when the Lamb shall be the light of the new Jerusalem. And we may say, that we have not so much two works before us, as two parts of the same work.

We can suppose, with some degree of truth, that the germ of deep thoughtfulness, which always existed in John, was ripened by means of the excitement which was stirred in him, through the conflict with the Gnostics. These heretics were perpetually taking the depths into their mouth, they were always speaking of penetrating into the depth of things (comp. at ch. ii. 24.) John had the mission assigned him, in opposition to their false depths, to disclose to the church the true depths, which was now more capable of entering into such depths than it was at an earlier period.

But however that may be, there can be no doubt that the polemical reference to the Gnostics is a bond which unites the Apocalypse with the other writings of John. In regard to the identity of the heretics referred to in the epistles with those of the seven epistles, comp. at ch. ii. 6; and in regard to the polemical character of the Gospel in respect to the Gnostics, see Olshausen's Introduction to the Gospel, and Lücke Comm. I. p. 206. The polemical and emphatic use of *knowing*, γινώσκειν, especially, is common to the Apocalypse with the other writings; it alludes to the vaunted *knowing* of the Gnostics, who thence derived their name (comp. at ch. ii. 17, 23, 24.) One cannot but be struck with the disproportionate frequency with which this *knowing* occurs in the Gospel—as often as in all the three first Gospels together. The intentional nature of its use in the Apocalypse is evident from this, that it never occurs there after the seven epistles, and three

out of the four times it occurs in them it bears immediate respect to the Gnostics.[1]

Common to all John's writings is the *emphasis that is laid on works, the earnestness that is used in urging the manifestation of the Christian life in the outward conduct* (comp. in the Apoc. ii. 24, iii. 1, xiv. 4 5, 12, 13.) In regard to the Gospel, Lücke remarks, p. 215, "As he represents the implantation and advancement of saving faith as the more immediate design of writing his Gospel, so also in his whole exhibition of doctrine and history he seems to indicate that the ground and centre of the Christian life is loving, active, obedient faith (see especially ch. xiv.—xvii.), not a mere knowing and apprehending." In the epistles also the greatest stress is laid on works. This common tendency of all John's writings is certainly to be derived less from the individual character of the man than from the relations of the time. Antinomianism, the heresy of the ungodly, who sought their justification in their knowledge, had begun to break out. The grand enemy was no longer, as in Paul's time, the legal and vexatious spirit of the Jews. The heathenish levity and carnal freedom was pressing hard into the church. A reaction against the abuse of what Paul had written at an earlier period in respect to the first enemy, was now urgently required in respect to the second.

It is also a common feature in the Apocalypse and the other writings of John, that the emphasis laid upon works is *laid on them in the general*, and that he goes less than Peter and Paul into detail regarding particular obligations and relative duties.

The keeping, preserving, too, which is so characteristically pressed by John, is to be explained from the contrast he wished to present to the Gnostics and their pernicious innovations.

In the Apocalypse, not less than in the Gospel, there is found a disposition to *represent Christ as of one nature with the Father*, to exhibit him as like God in power and honour. The Gospel of John and the Apocalypse are the two books of the New Testament, in which this disposition most strikingly displays

1 Lücke remarks, in regard to the Gospel, "It is not, perhaps, without significance, that he designates faith not rarely as a γινώσκειν of the truth, and places it as synonymous with πιστεύειν, for ex. ch. vii. 17, viii. 32, xvii. 3, where the γινώσκειν in regard to divine things comes out very strongly, and ch. vi. 69, x. 38, where it is combined with πιστεύειν; so that the idea of believing knowledge and of knowing belief alternate with each other."

itself. It was manifested perhaps not without some reference to the errors of the time (comp. at ch. ii. 6.) Here, too, it is brought out, not less than in the Gospel, that Christ has nothing which he has not received (ch. i. 1, ii. 27, 28), and that his people are admitted into the participation of what he has received from the Father (ch. iii. 21, ii. 26, comp. Gospel xii. 26, xiv. 2, xvii. 26.)

Schulze remarks, p. 309, that "as John in the Gospel was fond of exhibiting the great knowledge Jesus had of men, sometimes in general, and sometimes also in particular cases, so in the Apocalypse also Jesus often speaks as he who knows, and searches the hearts of men." (Comp. Gospel i. 47, 48, ii. 24, 25, iv. 29, xxi. 17; Rev. ii. 2, 9, 13, 19, iii. 1, 8, 15.)

It is a common feature in the Gospel and the Apocalypse, that they both frequently exhibit the positive and negative aspect of the same idea, (see in regard to the Gospel Credner's Introd. I., p. 226; Rev. ii. 2, 6, 8, 13, iii. 8, 17, 21.) Likewise the heaping up of additional explanatory remarks (see again Credner, and Rev. v. 8, xvi. 14, xix. 8, 10.)

The disciple, whom Jesus loved, as John is called in his Gospel, had the strongest claim to be so regarded, in the circumstance of Christ manifesting himself so specially to him (as is written in Rev. i. 12, sq.), according to John xiv. 21, "I will love him and will manifest myself to him." The first among the apostles, who on the Lord's day attained to the faith of a risen Saviour, (according to John xx. 8), was the fittest to be in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and behold the manifestations given of his risen power and glory.

Such are the grounds that may be adduced for the composition of the Apocalypse, by comparing it with the other writings of John. A second mine of proofs is to be found in what is elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament of John. How the circumstance reported of John in Luke ix., and the name given to him of a son of thunder, coincides with his being the author of the Apocalypse, was formerly shewn. That even during the period of our Lord's earthly ministry, the mind of John was revolving the kingdom, dominion and glory of Christ, appears from Mark x. 37, where the sons of Zebedee are represented as coming to Christ and saying, "Grant that we may sit, the one upon thy right hand and the other upon the left, in thy kingdom." According to Matth. xx.

21, the prayer for their thus sitting on each side of Christ was made by the mother of the sons of Zebedee to Christ. But she did so merely as the organ of her sons and presenting their petition; as appears from ver. 22, where Jesus addresses the sons themselves, and from ver. 24, which relates the indignation of the other disciples towards the two brothers. Now, in the Apocalypse we see in a purified form what still appears in the Gospel stained with selfish ambition. The whole is occupied with the kingdom, the glory of Christ. The apostle's elevated place in connection with it is represented in ch. xxi. 14. Those defenders of the Gospel, who are also opponents of the Apocalypse, are brought into considerable straits by this consideration. Though John had an especial predilection for the kingdom and glory of Christ, and might have been expected to dwell on what concerned these, yet his Gospel contains far less than the three first on the subject. But the embarrassment this occasions ceases whenever the Apocalypse is regarded as genuine, and is viewed along with the Gospel as a divided whole. The silence observed in the Gospel regarding the kingdom of Christ points us to another production of John, in which this subject was to be ex professo handled—a calling which was certainly not evinced to him for the first time, when he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

Along with Peter and James, John was a witness of the particular facts in our Lord's life, which were not immediately communicated to the other disciples, in particular the transfiguration, and the agony of the garden (Mark v. 37, "And he let no one follow him but Peter, James, and John the brother of James," Matth. xvii. 1, sq., xxvi. 37.) The two others here mentioned had departed this life before the time that the Apocalypse was composed. What could be more natural than that John should be initiated into the mysteries of the future in Christ's kingdom?

There are, besides, the following reasons to be adduced in support of the genuineness of the Apocalypse.

"In the introduction, in the conclusion, and throughout, there is to be perceived an apostolical power, and even a divine majesty." Where the capacity exists to discern the testimony of the Holy Spirit, it is always admitted that this testimony speaks with full force in behalf of such sections, as that which comprises the seven epistles, ch. vii. 9—17, and xiv. 1—5. After

acknowledging this, it would be but right if in respect to any difficulty experienced about the other parts, the cause were sought in one's own defective understanding. He who has attained to a clear and correct understanding of the book, will find the apparent difference between such sections and the rest completely vanish, and will be disposed to smile at De Wette, when he speaks of the Apocalypse as a book, "of which whole chapters must be set aside as mere shells, after a few drops of juice have been extracted from them." The testimony of the Holy Spirit also, in connection with the divine character on which it primarily proceeds, speaks the more strongly in behalf of the composition by John, as we have only the choice between the apostle John and a deceiver, who fraudulently used his name.

We have seen that the book contains a series *of true prophecies;* that till now none of its words have fallen to the ground; that with wonderful precision it discloses the future affairs of the church. No deceiver could have become cognizant of such divine purposes.

The prophecies of the Old Testament were not completely fulfilled by the first coming of Christ. They point to the final completion of God's kingdom upon earth. From the whole relation of the New Testament to the Old, there was required a New Testament directory for the understanding of Old Testament prophecy, for enabling us to separate between that in it, which had already been fulfilled, and that which still remained to be fulfilled; and such a directory behoved to bear on it the seal of a divine credential; as it really does in the Apocalypse, if that be the production of the apostle John.

Old Testament prophecy is most distinctly recognised in New Testament Scripture. If the Apocalypse were not a genuine and proper part of the canon, the Old Testament would, as regards the gift of prophecy, be far in advance of the New Testament. The time of *preparation* would in this respect stand upon a higher footing than the time of *fulfilment.*

Prophecy appears among the gifts of the New Testament (Rom. xii. 7, 1 Cor. xii. 10), and holds among them a distinguished place (comp. 1 Cor. xii. 28, where the prophets are placed immediately after the apostles and precede the teachers; ch. xiv. 1, where on the one side we have revelation and prophecy, on the other

knowledge and doctrine.) See also 1 Thess. v. 20; Acts ii. 17, 18. It is not to be imagined, that so important a gift should have so weak a representation in the canon of the New Testament, as it must have on the supposition of the Apocalypse not being genuine. The prophecy of Joel, quoted in the 2d ch. of the Acts, had in such a case received but a poor fulfilment.

The issue of the church's conflict with Judaism was briefly unfolded by our Lord in Matth. xxiv. xxv. We naturally expect, in the canon of the New Testament, a parallel announcement of the *issue of the conflict with heathenism;* and the rather so, as the Jewish persecution was but of short duration, while the heathenish power pressed heavily on the church for centuries. The proper time for unfolding this only came when the conflict with heathenism had actually begun. Even in the apostolic age the conflict with this power reached a fearful height. There arose in the church the most anxious longing for some direct consolation. She wept much (Rev. v. 4.) Therefore Jesus must say to her, Weep not; as he actually did by means of this book.

They who would exclude this book from the canon seek, with profane license, to destroy the wonderful correspondence that exists between the beginning of Holy Scripture and its end: creation and the fall—new heavens and a new earth—another paradise. The *regeneration,* which was briefly announced by our Lord himself, the last and best, should in that case remain hidden in the background; the New Testament should lose its full-toned conclusion. From the internal connection that subsists between prophecy and the apostleship (comp. at ch. i. 1), and from the high authority that was required to disclose this deep mystery, it is impossible that this closing book of Scripture should have been written by any one but an apostle.

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